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AN IRISH UTOPIA



JOHN H. EDGE, K.C.

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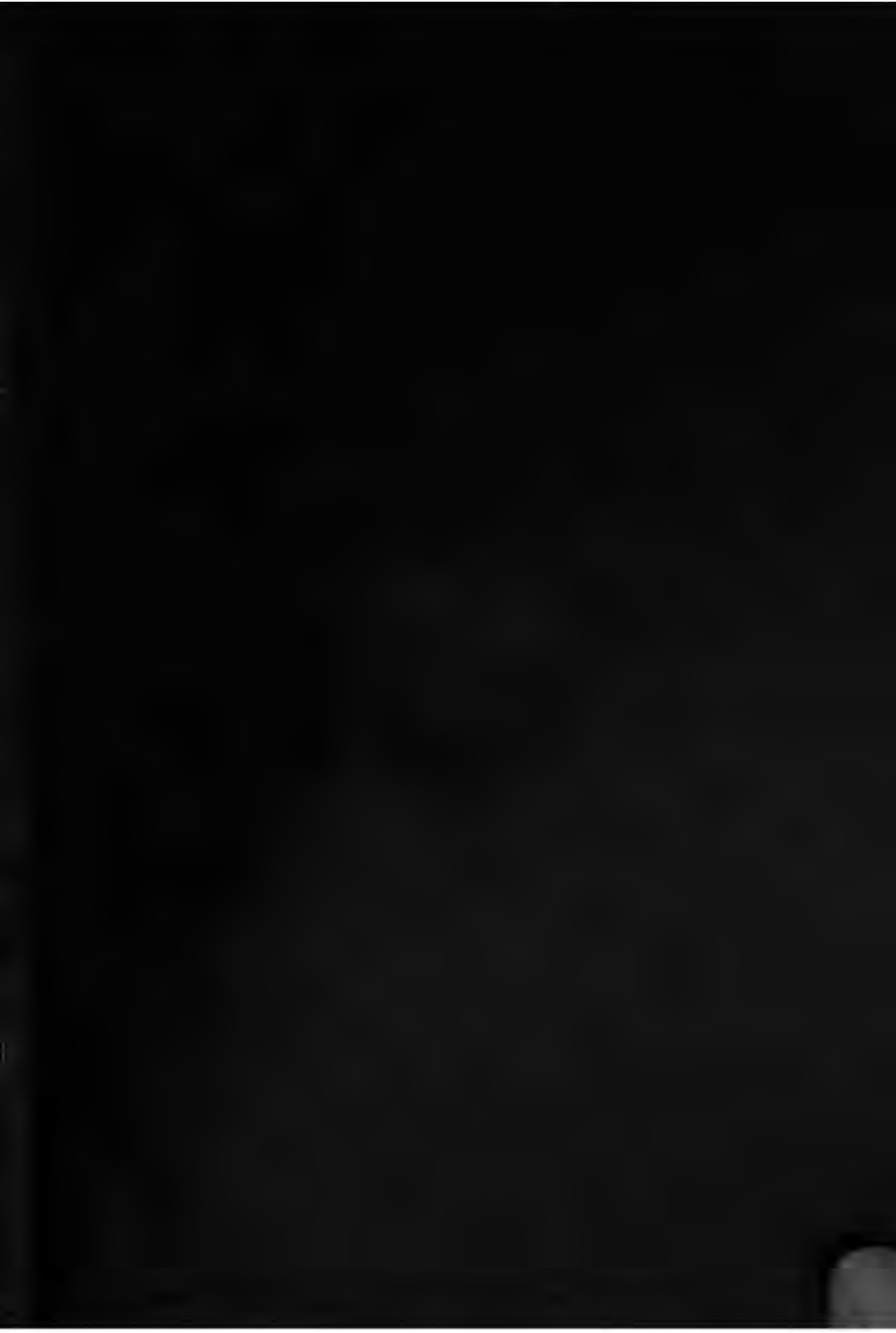


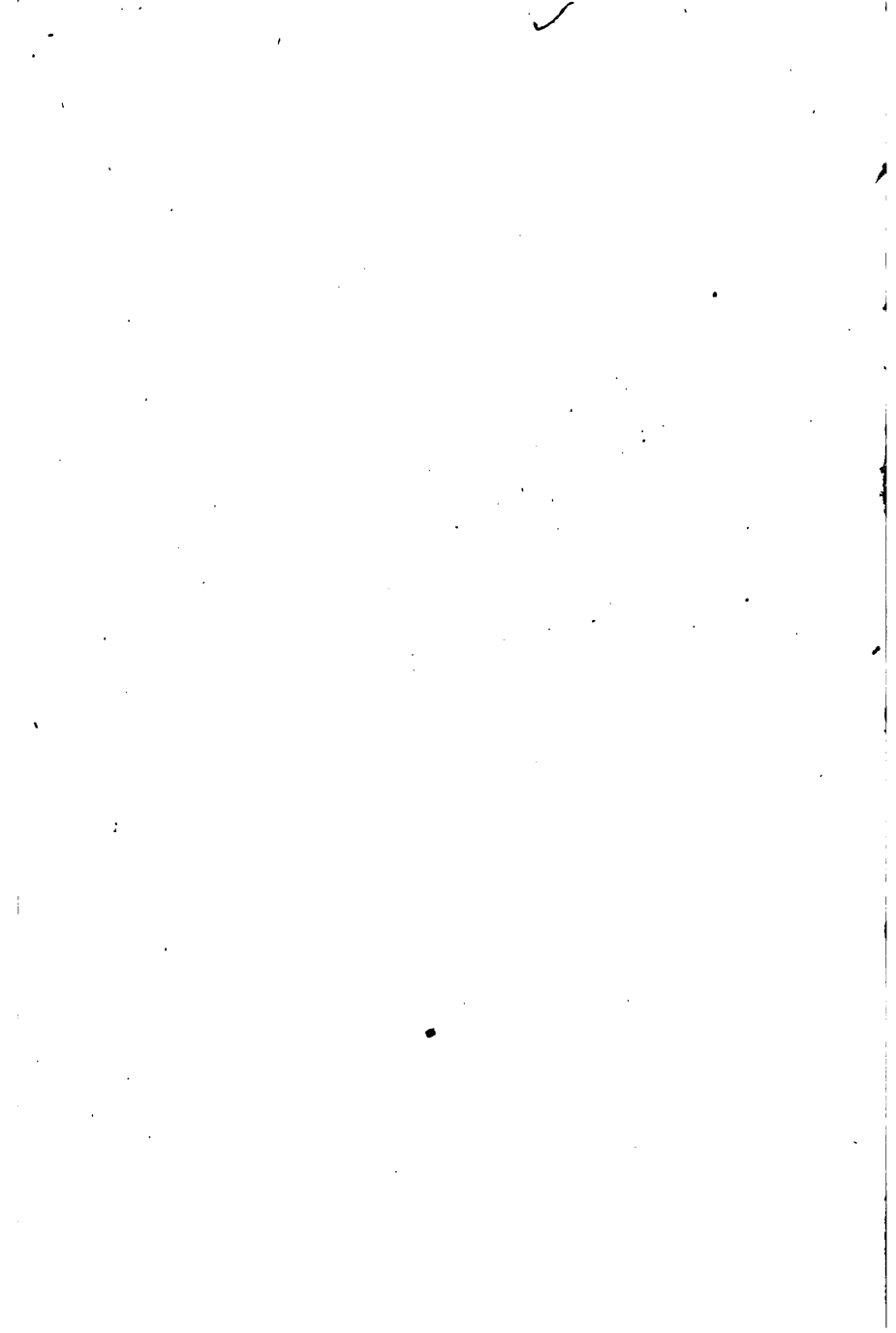
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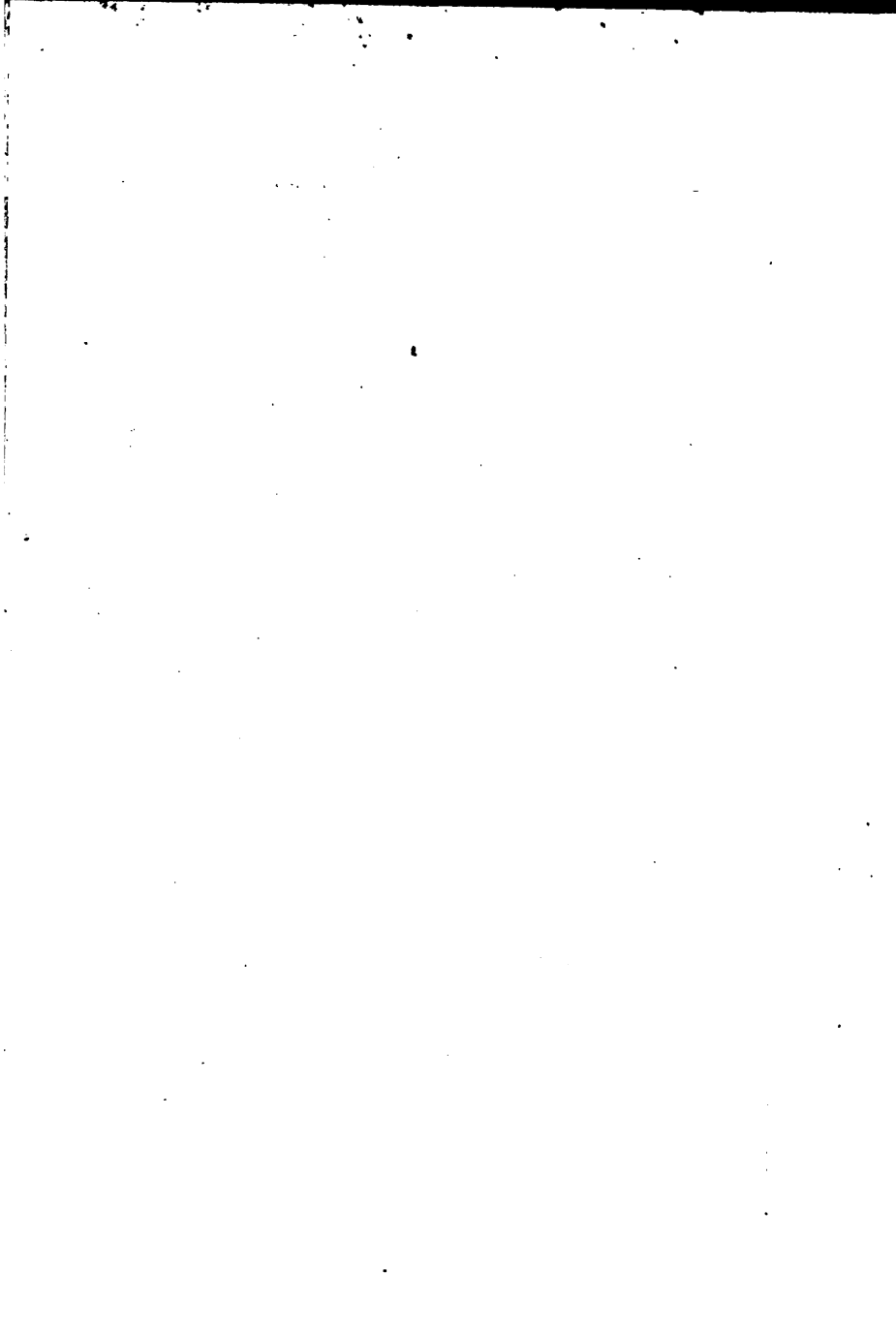
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AN IRISH UTOPIA.







GLENDALOUGH.

AN IRISH UTOPIA:

A STORY OF
A PHASE OF THE LAND PROBLEM.

BY

JOHN H. EDGE, M.A.

(TRIN. COLL., DUB.),

ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S COUNSEL, AND EX-LEGAL ASSISTANT
LAND COMMISSIONER.

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PREFACE.

I THINK it right to state that no covert allusion is made in this book to any person who lived in, or had property in, the Vale of Clara, Glenmalure, or Glendalough. The same remark applies to Shropshire. For example, the Corbets, the Dijons, the Malets, Father O'Toole, and the Mannings are not intended to represent any particular individuals.

As the work deals largely with and is in favour of "The Unity of Christendom," I may mention that I am a low-church Episcopalian.

I have ventured to introduce as one of the characters of the story the great Dr. J. W. Doyle, Roman Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. He has now been dead for many years; but the memory of his useful and noble life can never perish.

I have referred to several authorities in the narrative ; and I should like to add that anyone visiting Glendalough will find interesting information in the Rev. M. Hogan's learned and concise treatise, Black's Guide, and Murray's Handbook.

J. H. EDGE.

16 CLYDE ROAD, DUBLIN,
November, 1906.

AN IRISH UTOPIA.

CHAPTER I.

THE BAPTISM OF THE TWINS.

THE Vale of Clara extends from Laragh Bridge, near Glendalough, to the town of Rathdrum. It is one of the loveliest of the many lovely vales of beautiful Wicklow.

Rathdrum is a town in Ireland; it would be merely a village in England.

The Avonmore, or big Avon, flows out of the Lakes of Glendalough, and runs along the Vale the whole way, passes Rathdrum and Avondale—once the home of Charles Stewart Parnell—and joins the Avonbeg, or little Avon, at the Meeting of the Waters, which produced one of the sweetest of Moore's Irish Melodies.

From Rathdrum to the sea the Vale is called the Vale of Ovoca; and the double stream from the Meeting of the Waters is known as the Ovoca river.

The scenery of the County Wicklow cannot be as easily described as that of Switzerland. There are no violent contrasts in Wicklow like Switzerland. You have no snow mountains and glaciers, bringing

out in comparison pine woods, rich pastures, edelweiss, and wild flowers. Wicklow must be seen, and is hard to depict, either on paper or canvas. In spring or summer, more especially in bright sunshine after rain, no more delightful excursion could be taken than from Rathdrum through the Vale of Clara to Glendalough, either by car, carriage, or motor-car, or on foot or cycling, though the road is a bit hilly. If the valley from Rathdrum down the river to the sea at Arklow is better wooded and more luxuriantly beautiful, the view, about five or six miles from Rathdrum, in Clara Vale, where Clara Bridge suddenly comes into sight, is grander than anything in the Vale of Ovoca.

About half a mile further on and above the road are the ruins of the castle of the MacU'Thuils, or MacTooles, or O'Tooles, who for many years were the kings, if not strictly in law, certainly in fact, of all this mountainous region. Another castle beyond Laragh Bridge near Annamoe disputes the glory of being the stronghold of this once powerful sept. The ruins of the castle at Annamoe are curiously called Castle Kevin, whilst the ruins in the Vale of Clara are known locally as King O'Toole's Castle; and the townland on which it stands is Knockreagh, or King's Hill, corrupted into Knockrath. Probably both castles were fortresses against the English enemy, and were occupied by the king according to the necessity of the times.

A mile or two higher up than the castle, and near the heather on the wild mountain called the Castle Hill, was erected in the seventeenth century a large

Irish country house, built, as they mostly were, regardless of all architectural effect, of the massive stone of the district, three stories high and a basement story, and with the hall-door in the centre. The demesne or farm surrounding the house had a few oaks and ash-trees, and little ornamentation. This house was built by Michael Corbet, a captain in Cromwell's army, who got a Crown grant of the forfeited estates in the valley. He, having little means or assistance, built this house, bounded off a farm round it, and set some portions of the rest of the lands on long leases to his soldiers, who paid him small rents, and acted as his bodyguard against the so-called wild Irish. The greater part of the lands contained in Corbet's grant remained unoccupied and waste, until the close of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century, when wheat rose to a great price after the American War, and during the wars of the First Napoleon.

The Corbet of the period took advantage of this rise in value to set all his remaining waste or unoccupied land, and also some of his demesne on long leases at very high rents. He followed the example of others of his class in so doing.

The old English settlers, called by O'Connell "the English garrison," lived a profuse life, earned little money, and married the daughters of other settlers, getting no ready money—merely charges on their neighbours' estates—by way of fortune, just as their sisters had charges on their own estates. The land was all any of them had to subsist on; and its value was, as a rule, eaten up with family charges

created in this way. This rise in value, owing to war prices, was an irresistible temptation to the setting of lands at high prices ; and it was then that the bulk of the middlemen tenures was created. These middlemen formed the squireen or small squire class ; they built their residences on the best part of their leasehold, and sublet the remainder to the native inhabitants at still higher rents, and encouraged subdivision, as it increased their incomes. This system of itself was enough to cause friction and discontent ; and it was intensified by the squires and squireens being Protestants, and the occupiers, the sub-tenants, being Roman Catholics.

The Corbets for generations represented, by themselves or their nominees in the Irish Parliament, their pocket borough of Kingscastle, consisting of a few houses at their gate ; and finally at the Union the then head of the house, who was one of the members for his borough, received compensation for the loss of his two seats, and also the titles of Earl of Clara and Viscount Kingscastle. He had voted for the Union.

Some eighty years ago the Earl of Clara, grandson of the first Earl, and his Countess were conversing in the drawing-room of their house called Kingscastle. The Earl was then about forty years of age—a tall, soldierlike man, who had fought at Waterloo ; a favourable specimen of his class ; brave, with a great sense of his own importance ; but, so long as he was paid sufficient deference to, kindly, very hospitable, more domestic and temperate than was usual at the period, a good horseman and a keen

sportsman, and a fairly sure shot at a grouse. His Countess was an Englishwoman, the daughter of an English Viscount. Like many English wives imported into Ireland, she had started with the best intentions of improving what she always believed to be a "barbarous people." She could not understand their susceptibilities ; she under-rated their honesty ; she mistook their exaggerations of speech for lies, and their religion for idolatry.

The Earl and Countess had been married for about fifteen years ; and their eldest son, Lord Kingscastle, was away at school in England, preparatory for Eton. Their daughter, who came next, had been, a few years ago, killed at a children's picnic by falling out of St. Kevin's Bed ; and now they had twin sons, four months old. The Countess never recovered her cheerfulness after the tragical death of her daughter, and was a woman of a sorrowful spirit. She was now impressing on her husband a subject on which her mind had been exercised almost since the birth of the twins—the necessity of having them christened—nowadays a very easy matter ; quite different at that period. The living of Kingscastle was in the gift of the Corbet family ; and, as a matter of course, for generations a member of the family was sent to Trinity College, Dublin, and ordained for this vicarage. The present Vicar was the Hon. Fitzroy Corbet, the brother of the Earl. An intervening brother had died. The Vicar had a fat canonry in Dublin, and did not reside in the parish ; and when he did come, lived at Kingscastle. A Curate had lived at the rectory, and had per-

formed service once a week in the church. He was dead now for over six months, and the church was closed, unless when occasionally the Canon came down, or whilst the Countess's brother, an English clergyman, was over on a visit. The Canon had not appointed a new curate, for a double reason : first, the difficulty of getting one for the poorly paid stipend he was willing to give; and for the further reason, the disposal of the widow and eight children of the deceased Curate. They still remained in the rectory, having no other place to go to, supported by gifts from the Canon, and the bounty of the Countess. The Curate's wife was an Irishwoman; and the Countess never in the least understood her, but she pitied her; and the poor woman adored the Countess, and astonished that quiet, undemonstrative lady by her extravagance of language and gesture in showing her devotion to her patroness.

"Supposing, Michael," said the Countess, addressing the Earl, "the boys should die without being baptized, what peace of mind would I ever have? It would be worse than the loss of dear Gerty."

Now the Earl had been devoted to his daughter; many thought he felt the accident even more than the Countess, though he brushed the thought aside some way. The baptism of the twins he considered simply a form; and possibly the Countess in mentioning the death of their daughter to him had touched a sympathetic chord which the rites of the Church never could. The Earl was what may be termed an aristocratic Puritan. He regarded all Methodists, Presbyterians, and Dissenters as vulgar.

He, though he did not know "the Old Hundredth" from "God Save the King," liked the choral services in St. Patrick's and Christ Church Cathedrals; he thought them proper, respectable, and savouring of his rank. Still deep down in him was the Puritan. He so hated and despised Popery, that anything at all leading up to it he abhorred with all the contempt and loathing of his Roundhead ancestor. He believed baptism to be a proper rite amongst decent Christian people; but the ideas of the Countess on the subject he repudiated vaguely as "Popery."

"Poor Gerty!" said the Earl, "poor child! and she was so like my mother!"

"That was a great sorrow to us, Michael," said the Countess; "ought we not now do our duty by our living children?"

The Earl was vanquished, partly softened by the recollection of his little daughter, partly from his ignorance of theology. Probably neither he nor the Countess had definite views on the matter. The Earl then said, with an air of resignation, "I will do whatever you like. Fitzroy wrote that anyone can baptize; he need not be a clergyman."

Now the Countess did not like Fitzroy. He was abler, better-educated, stronger-willed than the Earl; and he was the Earl's brains-carrier, or was joined to Philip Thornton, the agent, in that capacity. He had a way of putting her down as one not knowing the country, and being a foreigner.

"I think," said the Countess, "that christening by a layman would be indecent and an outrage."

Fitzroy only told you that as an excuse for not attending to his duties."

This speech nearly lost the Countess all her conquered ground.

"I wish, Charlotte," said the Earl in his severest tone, which meant he was the Earl of Clara and master of the Glen, the Countess, and all in it, "you would not speak in that way of Fitzroy; his great gifts would be lost here."

The Countess saw her mistake, and looked out of the window by way of gaining time, and recognised the tall figure of Father Lawrence O'Toole, the Parish Priest of Kingscastle, walking up the drive.

CHAPTER II.

THE MIDDLEMAN.

FATHER O'TOOLE was a descendant of the old Kings of the Valley. He had been educated on the Continent, and was a welcome guest at "the great house." The Countess, by way of dropping the debatable subject of the christening which she and the Earl had been discussing, quietly said : "Father O'Toole is coming to pay us a visit."

The Earl was a good man, was fond of the Countess, and hated any disagreement with her, and in a quite changed voice cheerfully cried out : "He is an ordained clergyman ; he can baptize them."

On most questions, except where the commercial instinct is aroused, the Irish in debate, whether in Parliament or the domestic circle, by quickness and audacity vanquish their slower-thinking rulers ; and, above all, in theology, the English are nowhere with them. The Countess never thought of anyone except an ordained Church of England or Church of Ireland minister, as by law established, performing the ceremony ; and here Father O'Toole was suddenly sprung upon her. Before she could collect her scattered thoughts Father O'Toole was announced. He entered as an old friend, with the easy, gracious, and courtly manners of the foreign-educated priest of gentle birth. He had come to soften the Earl's

heart about one of the few Roman Catholic occupying tenants which the Earl had.

"I do not like," said the Earl, "to meddle with Thornton ; still I will speak to him about it."

Father O'Toole thanked him, and took a pinch of snuff, and, turning to the Countess, inquired for the twins.

"By-the-way, Father O'Toole," interrupted the Earl, "the Countess is very uneasy about having them baptized ; could you do it for us ? You would not, of course" (laughing), "claim them as your own afterwards."

Father O'Toole, though he did not unnecessarily obtrude his religious views on his Protestant neighbours, never, in word or deed, forgot his faith or his calling. He at once became serious, and every inch the priest, and answered gravely : "Baptism, my Lord, is a sacrament—a solemn rite of your Church as well as mine ; we believe in its necessity and efficacy, and in an emergency we are bound to perform the ceremony, which cannot be idly repeated. I suppose you and your gracious lady, my friend the Countess, would not allow the rite to be performed in the cabin we have for our church ; and I cannot, of course, enter your church for any purpose ; still I can celebrate it in this room." Then (smiling), "My friend the Canon admits the validity of my orders, though, I am sorry to say, he differs from some of my opinions."

The Countess personally liked Father O'Toole ; his *gracieuse* manner suited her—a contrast to her own. He never sneered at England ; and, above all,

her genuinely kind heart sympathized with his in caring for the poor, and many a consultation they had about "feeding the hungry." She answered, after a pause: "We are greatly indebted to you for coming to our relief." She said this in faltering accents, and looking kindly at the priest; still, being a thorough conservative, she would have liked the ceremony performed in an orthodox way in the Protestant Church by a clergyman of her own faith. "We expect the Dijons to lunch," she added.

"Well," says the Earl, "they will only be a congregation."

Immediately afterwards a Mr. Malet was announced. Without any betrayal of good breeding it was evident he was not only an uninvited but also an undesired guest. Mr. Ambrose Malet was the grandson of a middleman who had got, about forty years previously, several leases, for lives renewable for ever, of a considerable extent of poor land and mountain liberty from the Earl's grandfather at high rents, just when the upward turn in prices and rents began. He was above the middle height, of a powerful and also active build. He had a handsome, coarse face, with the healthy, embrowned colour which the Wicklow air gives. He was about thirty years old, an unmarried man, who lived near the Castle. Being a younger son, with some vague idea of his getting a profession, he had entered Trinity College, Dublin, where he became more distinguished for town and gown rows than for learning.

The Earl's brother, the Canon, was a good deal older, and was just finishing his studies when Malet

entered College; and Malet rescued him from being killed in a fight with the town roughs at King William's Statue in College Green, round which the College Boys were marching in triumph after the public entry of a new Lord Lieutenant.

Malet left college without a degree. On the death of an elder brother, who died from the effects of a blow he received in levying a distress for rent, and his father dying soon after, he became the owner of the leaseholds. He farmed the cultivated enclosed land he had in his own possession, grazed the mountain, collected the rents as best he could from his sub-tenants, and jobbed in cattle and horses. He was a daring rider and the crack shot of the district. The Earl was really fond of him. Malet knew how to manage his landlord; he never forgot he was the Earl. The Earl had a right of shooting over Malet's lands and mountain, and also other mountains which were unleased, and on which the Earl's occupying tenants had rights of grazing. Malet always accompanied the Earl in the shooting season, leaving to his superior lord the easy shots, and taking himself the harder ones. The bag would have been light at the end of the day only for Malet's prowess. He, without any salary or appointment, acted as the Earl's head keeper. The regular staff of game-keepers took their directions from him, and his visit on the present occasion was to report an audacious case of poaching. He had scarcely arrived when the Count Dijon and his wife came.

The Count, though Irish, looked like a foreigner, having been reared on the Continent, and spoke

English with a foreign accent. He was a distinguished-looking, well-bred man. His name was Molloy, and his very remote ancestor had come a couple of centuries ago from the King's County, and had married an heiress of the O'Byrne family, who almost rivalled the Royal House of O'Toole in importance in the district and in vast possessions of land. The Count was a noble of the Holy Roman Empire, and inherited through his mother an estate in the Sabine Hills and a large quantity of more portable property. His wife, who was always called the Marchesa—a title she was supposed to have obtained through her father, an Italian—had inherited vast wealth through her mother, a Spaniard of noble birth. The Marchesa was born and reared in Spain, called herself a Spaniard, and was genuinely one in appearance and bearing. She was handsome and haughty-looking, and despised Ireland and the Irish, and did not conceal her indifference to what she considered the petty subjects which interested the people amongst whom she lived.

The Dijons were the Earl's nearest neighbours. They lived in Glenmalure, just over the watershed which separates the Vale of Clara from Glenmalure. Their Italian-looking residence, known as Château Dijon, was built high up on the mountain side of Glenmalure Valley and not far distant from Kingscastle when approached by a wild, steep road which spans the mountain top and is a connecting link between the Vale of Clara and Glenmalure. Château Dijon stood on the only remaining portion of the once large estates of the O'Byrne family which

remained in the Count's possession, and consisted of a few acres of arable land and a mountain, mearing at the top the Earl's mountain.

Lunch was postponed and the twins sent for, who arrived, one carried by Mrs. Simpson, the Curate's widow; she carried the baby, for the simple reason that she was the only person who could quiet him. She had been present at his birth, and, being an experienced woman in such matters, was constantly in the nursery of the big house. An ordinary nurse carried the other twin, and an assistant followed. At the same time a young girl of about twenty-five summers came into the room. She was the Lady Violet Manning, daughter of the Marquis of Wrekin—a fine-looking, handsome English girl, with masses of golden hair.

Father O'Toole asked for the elder of the two, remarking, "We must not put Ephraim before Manasseh."

To which Mrs. Simpson answered, "I hold Manasseh, who is not only the elder but the finer of the two; he will always be known by the mark on his arm."

The elder child was then christened Stephen, from time immemorial the name of the second son in the Corbet family; and subsequently the younger child was christened George, the name of the late Lord Dartmoor, the Countess's father.

Father O'Toole registered the births in a book he carried; and the ceremony being over, the party partook of an old-fashioned luncheon. The Earl invited Malet. Without a very marked discourtesy

he could not have been left out. The Countess never liked Malet, and latterly she used every device to discourage his visits.

Lady Violet Manning was the daughter of an old friend of hers, the Marchioness of Wrekin. Lady Violet was one of a large family who had been invited over to Dublin for the Castle festivities, and had come down to Kingscastle after a gay season. She was a bold whip, and, with merely a page-boy attendant, drove, on one occasion, a gig of the period into Rathdrum. The horse took fright entering the town, ran away, and, being market day, must inevitably have come into collision with some other vehicle had not Malet, at the risk of his life, rushed into the road, caught and stopped the horse. Lady Violet was so unnerved that she gladly accepted Malet's offer to drive her home. Malet of course had to call to inquire whether she had recovered. He, from being a very irregular attendant at church, became as constant and as diligent as the veteran parish clerk. He had a fine bass voice and a good ear, and sat next Lady Violet in what they playfully called the choir. To the Countess's horror Malet was invited to singing practices which were not always limited to church music, and very friendly relations soon became established between the young people. Lady Violet laughed at the Countess's cautions, and excused herself on the plea that there were no other young men handy for her to talk to and sing with.

Malet and Lady Violet had been god-parents to

one of the twins, or gossips, as she called it, and they sat together at lunch.

The conversation turned on the great topics of the day—the proposed Catholic Emancipation and the tithe war, just commencing. The Earl was, for those days, very liberal in his politics.

When the ladies retired to allow the gentlemen to have a little more wine, Malet was eagerly questioned as to the grouse prospects. He gave a critical account of them, and explained that he had shot off the old bachelor cocks at the end of the last season, which disturbed the pairing, and that he had also destroyed the vermin.

A bench of magistrates was then and there arranged, or packed, some might call it, to meet at Kingscastle in the ensuing week to try the poacher, the sentence being freely discussed and settled before the trial. It was felt that an example should be made, and that, as the man was a notorious poacher, whatever he had done on this special occasion for which he was to be tried did not matter much.

After the sentence was settled satisfactorily, the gentlemen returned to the drawing-room. Father O'Toole, who had an excellent voice, well trained, sang Moore's melody, "By that lake whose gloomy shore"; and Malet followed in a fine, though untrained, voice with "The wind that shakes the barley." This last song being vehemently encored by everyone except the Countess, Malet sang Moore's rather amatory sonnet, "Rosa," to the accompaniment of Lady Violet on the pianoforte. Malet and Lady Violet had evidently had a rehearsal

previously, and Malet sang it far more correctly than his former ditty.

The impromptu christening party soon afterwards broke up. When they were gone, the Countess said in her severest tones, "Really, Violet, that song which you played an accompaniment to is not fit for a drawing-room."

If the poor Countess thought she had extinguished Lady Violet, she was completely mistaken, who answered gaily, "Charlotte, pray do not be prudish. I heard Mr. Moore himself sing it to the best people in Dublin, at Lady Balbriggan's, in Merrion Square."

"If you heard it in the King's palace, that would not make it a proper song."

"Tut, tut, Charlotte," said the Earl; "poor Malet only wanted to amuse us; you are making too much about it."

Lady Violet murmured quietly, "'Honi soit qui mal y pense,'" and the subject dropped.

CHAPTER III.

FATHER O'TOOLE.

A NEAT little cottage close to the big house was the residence of the Parish Priest, Father O'Toole. At the time our tale commences he was about forty years of age. He was descended from the senior and most important branch of the oldest family in the district. He talked but little of his royal race ; still he was quietly proud of being sprung from a line of kings. He considered the true way of spelling his name was "MacU'Thuil," anglicised into MacToole or O'Toole. He maintained laughingly that the English had taken away not only his country, but also his language. He deplored the extinction of Irish in the County Wicklow. He said all true poetry and music had gone with it ; that Tommy Moore wrote merely good company songs, not the heart-stirring poems which were sung to the old Irish harps.

Father O'Toole had a fine baritone voice, and could accompany himself upon one of these harps—a kind of heirloom in his family—and was proud of there being finer singing in his poor little thatched chapel than in the grander parish church. He had been adopted by an uncle who made a considerable fortune in the Wicklow timber trade, and who spent

the closing years of his life in the cottage Father O'Toole now lived in. This was not a parochial house. It stood on about thirty acres of land, and was held in fee. Father O'Toole said his ancestors owned the valley of Glendalough as well as that of Clara, and had granted Glendalough to St. Kevin to found his ecclesiastical sacred city. His uncle was disappointed at first when his heir, whom he had sent to school to France, declared he would become a monk. Finding him firm on the point, he yielded, and sent him to Coimbra, in Portugal, to the Augustinian monastery which flourished there. Here he met James Warren Doyle, afterwards the famous Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. Dr. Doyle, by his powerful will and high intellectual abilities, gained a quiet influence over young Lawrence O'Toole, and persuaded him to return to Ireland.

Father O'Toole was at first Curate in the parish of which he afterwards became the Parish Priest; he preferred it to more prominent positions, as being his native place. He was an accomplished linguist, and in particular a good Irish scholar, and familiar with the folk-lore of the valleys of Clara and Glendalough, and with the ancient history of the old ecclesiastical remains. It was the dream of his life to erect a church worthy of the locality; and at this time he had collected a considerable sum towards that great object. Count Dijon had subscribed munificently. The Earl of Clara and Canon Corbet, and most of the Protestants in the district, were also subscribers. Father O'Toole had no enemies, and troops of friends. Like many of the Roman Catholic clergy of that

period, he was a Freemason. He was, in fact, the Chaplain of his lodge in Rathdrum; Count Dijon, the Earl of Clara, and Canon Corbet being also members of it. Malet was not a member; he said he refused to join. This statement was doubted, and the Freemasons could not be drawn on the subject. Malet was secretary of the Orange Lodge, and looked well in his orange sash on the 12th July. Through the combined influence of Father O'Toole and the Earl, the procession on that memorable yearly festival passed off peaceably. As the Bull of Clement XII had not been enforced, there was no real prohibition at this period against a Roman Catholic joining the Masonic body; nor was there until Garibaldi's revolution. It was then suspected by the Roman Catholic hierarchy that the Italian Freemasons were in sympathy with the Carbonari Society which supported Garibaldi; and a general order was issued against Roman Catholics continuing in or joining this ancient brotherhood. This command was loyally obeyed in Ireland. The Irish Freemasons never did join nor were they ever accused of joining in politics; and the fact of the Roman Catholics properly obeying the laws of their Church in resigning their membership showed conclusively that Freemasonry does not sap or meddle with the religious faith of its members. It, however, exacts the all-important fundamental conditions of a belief in an Almighty God and the immortality of the soul. It is very probable that the determined hostility of the Roman Catholic Church to Freemasonry since the Italian revolution was the moving cause which induced two-thirds of the

Masonic Lodges in France about thirty years ago to take the fatal step of altering their constitution so as to dispense with the necessity of the profession of a belief in God. Their members are not, nor are the majority of them, atheists ; still such action forced the other lodges all over the world to wholly discontinue fraternal communication with these French lodges.

Shortly after the christening party mentioned in our first chapter, Father O'Toole was sitting at breakfast in his cottage with his friend, Dr. Doyle, then and for some years Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. Dr. Doyle when he wanted a rest and human sympathy came over to his old chum. It was a relief to both of them that Kingscastle was in the Diocese of Glendalough, and not in Kildare or Leighlin. They met, as of old, on an equal footing. Father O'Toole, when they were quite alone, and only then, still called the austere Bishop "Jemmy." Father O'Toole rarely visited Carlow, and took no part, except in private conversation, in the stirring events of the day.

As they sat over their chocolate—a reminder of their Portuguese life—they offered a striking contrast to each other. Both, no doubt, were tall, dignified men, with intellectual faces ; there the resemblance, however, ceased. Father O'Toole had a kindly, benevolent countenance, brimming over with geniality. He looked in perfect health, arising from his quiet, reposeful life, conscious that, in his own way, he was doing good, and contented with his lot. On the other hand, even in retirement, the Bishop had a

restless, eager, anxious, combative expression. He never had the hardy constitution of his friend ; and he overtaxed his delicate body by unceasing mental and physical work, more than sufficient for a herculean frame.

We will not attempt to intrude on their private conversation. They agreed to accept an invitation to dinner with Count Dijon and the Marchesa, and took a long, delightful walk to Glendalough, and through its sacred buildings.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FAMOUS J. K. L.

THE Château Dijon was a far more imposing building than Kingscastle. It was built after the plan of an Italian mansion early in the eighteenth century, and nearly ruined the owner of the period in erecting it. Italian artists came over to decorate it; and it had a grand view of the whole of Glenmalure. The exterior, on account of the damp climate, did not allow of the large windows and verandahs and appearance of open-air life characteristic of the Italian country mansion; but inside it was completely southern and foreign in its decoration and furniture.

Small as this remnant of the O'Byrne estates was, it would not have been in the possession of Count Dijon except for evasions of the law which now would be considered justifiable. The penal laws enabled a member of the family on turning Protestant to inform and claim the estate of his or her Roman Catholic relation. The authenticated records reveal a surprising number of properties forfeited and claimed in this way. The last of the O'Byrnes, who lived on the lands in an old house, pulled down to erect the Château Dijon, and father of the heiress who married a Molloy, had a deaf old mother living

with him. It became rumoured that Patsy O'Byrne, an attorney and a cousin of the family—a great man for interminable suits and equally long bills—was about to conform and claim the little estate. The matter was well talked about in the living-room of the O'Byrnes; and all the time old Mother O'Byrne sat bent up on her armchair in the ingle-nook, telling her beads and crooning to herself. One day she surprised the party by suddenly asking: "Has skelly-eyed Patsy turned Protestant?"

Being told that he had done so, she then asked another question: "If I turned, Jerry" (to her son), "I might get the estate before him?"

"Of course you would, mother," said Jerry; "you are nearer related."

"Then I will, Jerry," said she; "it is better that one old woman's soul should be damned than that the place should go out of the right line; and may the curse of the Holy Trinity rest on Patsy!"

She conformed accordingly, got the estate, and preserved it for her son. Another similar rumour became current after the Molloy's got the property; and then the Corbet of the day, and his successors after him, until this iniquitous penal code was relaxed, continued to hold the estate under an honourable trust for the Dijon family. In doing this they only followed the example of many other Protestants (especially in Connaught) throughout Ireland, showing that more sympathy with the defenceless Roman Catholics existed amongst the Protestants than they were credited with in England and on the Continent of Europe.

The Count and Marchesa had some of the neighbouring Roman Catholic clergy to meet the Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin and his host, Father O'Toole. The only Protestant present was an old maiden cousin of the Count, who lived according to the easy, hospitable habit of the day, *shuling* about (as the phrase was) amongst her relatives, having no fixed home of her own, and who was at this time staying at the Château.

The Bishop was not at his ease in ordinary society, although he could relax with Father O'Toole or some of his intimate friends or relatives. He was really the most kind-hearted and large-hearted of men; but he was always possessed of overmastering ideas and projects which banished all small-talk, and he was absolutely intolerant of stupidity, or what may be called the side-issues or immaterial details of a question. He was for grasping tightly the nettle, and not playing with it. On this evening, having had a few days' rest, and showing almost to the end of his short life wonderful recuperative powers, he was in great form. He was a bad conversationalist, as he kept the whole talking to himself; but he was tolerated in this on account of his wonderful personality, and also because he was invariably instructive, original, and interesting. His dark, wondrous eyes and face, like one of Murillo's pictures of the Spanish friars, fascinated his audience. His great topic on this night was the unity of Christendom. Here are a few extracts from his conversation:—

"Should I live to witness its accomplishment" (that is the unity of Christendom), he exclaimed,

"I would say with holy Simeon, 'Now thou dost dismiss Thy servant, O Lord, according to Thy word in peace, because my eyes have seen Thy salvation.'"

He then continued: "It may not become so humble an individual as I am to hint even at a plan for effecting so great a purpose as the union of Catholics and Protestants in one great family of Christians; but as the difficulty does not appear to me to be at all proportioned to the magnitude of the object to be attained, I would presume to state that if Protestant and Catholic divines of learning and conciliatory character were summoned by the Crown to ascertain the points of agreement and difference between the Churches, and if the result of their conferences were made the basis of a project to be treated on between the heads of the Churches of Rome and of England, the result might be more favourable than at present anticipated."

Here, whilst the prelate was pausing for breath, the Count contrived to interpose, "The result would be another Thirty Years' War."

The Bishop glared on his host, forgetting that he was partaking of his hospitality, and evidently anticipating a duel with a narrow-minded antagonist at his proposed Round-table Conference, and then added: "It is pride and points of honour which keep us divided on many subjects, not a love of Christian humility, charity, and truth."

No one dared to interrupt again, and the Bishop glided off into the kindred question, that, even if there could not be a union of beliefs, there ought to be a common secular education, pointing out that it

would be the best preparation for a unity of Churches, and concluded : " I do not see how any man, wishing well to the public peace, and who looks on Ireland as his country, can think that that peace can ever be permanently established, or the prosperity of the country secured, if children are separated at the beginning of life on account of their religious opinions."

Father O'Toole, fearing perhaps another little scene between the Bishop and their host, dexterously managed to turn the subject to the question whether St. Patrick ever visited Glendalough, and this drew the Bishop on the point whether, like Homer, some at least of the deeds attributed to St. Patrick were not the doings of less known men which were joined to his well-known and authenticated actions. The Bishop was eagerly proceeding to show why the probability was that no one man could have reached them all, when he was pulled up from a wholly unexpected quarter.

Whilst the rest of the company, to the neglect of their repast, sat enthralled on the burning questions of the unity of Christendom and national education, Miss Rhoda Jameson, the maiden aunt, contrived to make an excellent dinner, drinking a couple of glasses of fine old crusted port. She, however, having apparently satisfied her creature comforts, directed her attention to the Bishop's remarks about St. Patrick ; and at last, breaking into the middle of one of his well-measured sentences, she exclaimed, " I can listen to this no longer. There could only be one St. Patrick. He was a Protestant, and a most

respectable man, and a near relative of [with great emphasis] my family." Saying this with great dignity, and looking scornfully at the amazed Bishop, she left the table and the room.

The incident, however, resulted in perfect harmony. The Count tapped his forehead and said, "Poor Rhoda is not quite accountable."

The Bishop laughed.

The ladies, Continental fashion, remained at the table. Coffee was brought round. The Marchesa sang a Spanish song, and Father O'Toole some Irish melodies, and the entertainment ended in perfect good-humour.

Dr. Doyle's Life has been well written by the late Mr. Fitzpatrick; and a sketch of him by Mr. MacDonagh gives, in a pithy, interesting way, the salient points of his too short and remarkable career. Daniel O'Connell is justly called "the Liberator"; still, if Catholic Emancipation could not have been carried without him, it is perhaps equally certain that it could not have been carried without Dr. Doyle. His famous letters under the *nom de plume* "J. K. L.," his striking personality, his examination before the Parliamentary Committee, largely assisted O'Connell's more politic measures. It may well be questioned whether after his examination on the tithe question the thoughtful English people may not have reflected on the cruel absurdity of penalising a religion which had so great a Prelate. Macaulay compares Ignatius Loyola with Wesley; Dr. Doyle may well be placed with either of them. Wesley's

sermons to the Cornish miners were fully equalled by Doyle's to the Queen's County colliers.

Dr. Doyle asserted that tithes were originally the property of the poor and not of the clergy; and he recommended passive resistance to the payment of them. He, in this course, only adopted the tactics of the Quakers. Passive resistance has now been so generally followed against similar payments, that the ingenuity of the Legislature is sorely tried in devising "conscience clauses," to protect persons from the consequences of breaking what they honestly regard as unrighteous laws. Dr. Doyle's denunciation of tithes was taken in a spirit he little thought of. The tithe rebellion led to a revival of Whiteboyism in his diocese, chiefly in the colliery district of the Queen's County, where the Whiteboys were known as "Whitefeet." Dr. Doyle, dressed in his episcopal robes, preached in the open chapel-yards on the colliery hills to large congregations of wild and excited people. He boldly denounced lawless violence as a crime not alone against the laws of man, but also against the laws of the Church of God. His efforts in the end met with great success, but the strain caused him by worry of mind broke down completely his feeble health, and "burst his mighty heart"; and he died at the early age of forty-eight—a great loss to the country he loved so well.

He did not believe that there were "two Irelands," one Catholic, the other Protestant. He even had visions of a unity of Christendom, or, until that could be attained, that the youth of the country

should be brought up together, a united race for a common fatherland.

Whether or not these views were *Utopian* and impracticable, they were the views of a large-hearted Irishman. Catholic Emancipation is now, no doubt, regarded by all reasonable people as a measure of justice, or, at all events, as a measure which was inevitable. It surely emancipated more people than the Irish Roman Catholics; it led to the admission of the Jews into the British Parliament; it widened the tone of thought in that assembly; and by exposing to the piercing light of public opinion similar intolerance in other countries, freed them also from their penal laws, and, as a recent example, Dr. Doyle's and O'Connell's efforts in Ireland have rendered the consecration of a Protestant Bishop in Spain now possible.

CHAPTER V.

THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE.

LADY VIOLET MANNING was easily persuaded by the Countess to remain longer than was originally intended. She was not missed at home, where there was a superfluity of daughters. She was company for the Countess: a fine, bouncing, healthy, young Englishwoman; if she had not herself much nimbleness of wit, she laughed heartily at the wit of others. Notwithstanding the accident Malet rescued her from, she drove and rode fearlessly; she actually learned to shoot under Malet's instructions. She showed herself capable also of more serious things. She taught some of the peasant children to read; and she acted as daughter of the house generally in Kingscastle.

Malet, one way or another, was a good deal about the castle, apparently on some useful errand for its master; and the Countess had ceased to think there could be anything serious between him and Lady Violet, when one day, after a talk with Malet, the Earl sought the Countess alone, and, with a solemn face, and perhaps a twinkle in his high-born eyes, said, "Charlotte, Malet has been with me."

"I know he has," was the answer; "he haunts the

house. I am glad we are not inflicted with him for lunch to-day."

"It is more than lunch this time," said the Earl.

"Surely, Michael," said the Countess, "you have not invited him to meet the Archbishop to-morrow."

"I have not," said the Earl "He has asked my permission and yours to speak to Violet."

"Then he has the audacity and ignorance to think he can marry her? Of course, Michael, you gave him his answer, and he will trouble the girl no more?"

"Certainly, Charlotte," said the Earl, "he surprised me; still, to do the man justice, it was straightforward for him to speak to me first."

"I cannot see what use there was in it," said the Countess. She was English, and slow to form a decided opinion; but when once roused, as the Earl often found to his cost, she was obstinate and impossible to change or appease.

"Violet is to blame in letting him attend her as she does; she would soon have given him his answer if he had spoken to her."

The Earl was glad of an excuse to end the conversation, which was getting too hot, and said, "Then, in Heaven's name, let Violet answer him"; rang the bell, and Violet was summoned from the grounds, where she was inquiring after her horse, and entered the room the picture of health and good-humour.

"Violet," said the Countess, "Mr. Malet was here."

"Indeed, so I heard," was the quick reply: "it is too provoking; I wanted to see him. Tulip walks a little lame."

"You make too much use of Mr. Malet, Violet," added the Countess severely; "and now a very unpleasant thing has happened. You are not free from blame; still I did not think he would presume so."

"Why, Charlotte, what on earth has happened?" said the girl.

"He has asked," continued the Countess, "to be allowed to propose to you. Of course Michael will write and tell him it is impossible: except that it was necessary for you to give up your friendly terms with him, we would not have mentioned the matter at all. It must be kept from Fitzroy, the Dijons, and everybody. It is one of the faults of our class in Ireland. No common farmer in England would presume on acting so; he would know his position better."

This was a long speech for the usually reticent Countess. The Earl's eyes, if they had not done so before, now actually twinkled; he took care, however, to turn his face away from his wife. He just said: "Come now, Violet, what do you say?"

Violet blushed, held her head down, and answered shyly: "Well, Michael, I would like to think about it."

"Violet," actually screamed the astonished Countess, "do you forget what is due to your family and to us, if not to yourself?"

If the delinquent had been cajoled and wheedled a little, the result possibly, but not probably, might have been different; being a girl, however, with a will of her own, this was just the most disastrous course to take with her.

"Charlotte," she said stiffly, "Mr. Malet has paid me the highest compliment a man can pay a woman."

"On the contrary," interposed the Countess, "he has insulted you."

Violet continued, unheeding the interruption: "I certainly shall write to my father about it. You, Charlotte, have been very good to me; still this is a question for my father."

"Then," said the Countess, trying to be calm, "you will accept him." She knew the Marquis of Wrekin had no fortune to give his numerous daughters, and he had never met Malet. Violet's mother was dead, and there was no one to oppose this outrageous alliance. The girl's writing to her father had then only one meaning.

Violet would not have made up her mind so quickly only for the Countess's opposition. She was a strong-minded girl, not given, as a rule, to the melting mood. She would, however, have been more than human if, after a proposal of marriage being so conveyed to her, and so treated by her nearest friend, she had not broken down; and she did burst into tears. This, as might be expected, brought the Earl to her aid. He went over, patted her golden head soothingly, and said: "Whatever you decide on doing, Vi, count on me as your friend."

"I suppose," said the Countess indignantly, "that means that I am the silly, infatuated girl's enemy. You do not realize, foolish child, what you are doing—what people you will be thrown amongst—that odious man's vulgar sisters; his pigsty of a house—a man

without any means to maintain you in the position you have been accustomed to."

"Charlotte," said the Earl, "I think, for the present, the least said the soonest mended. Vi will write to her father. Meanwhile I will civilly ask Malet not to come here."

This ended an unpleasant little scene.

CHAPTER VI.

DINNER AT KINGSCASTLE.

IN the course of the year following Malet's request to be permitted to pay his addresses to Violet, they were married. The young lady returned to her people ; and the marriage took place in the parish church adjoining the Marquis of Wrekin's castle and demesne in Shropshire.

Neither the Earl nor Countess, nor any friend or relative of Malet's, attended the wedding. In those days a journey to England was more formidable than it is now ; and the match was not what might be considered an ideal one. The financial arrangements were never exactly divulged. A couple of the judgments on Malet's leaseholds were cleared off ; his sisters went to live in Dublin with their married sister, the wife of a well-to-do attorney ; the house was done up, the roof was newly slated, and things, as often happens, did not turn out so badly as anticipated. Once the step became inevitable, the Countess became kind and helpful. She had never liked Malet. Had he been a Papist, she would have made allowances for him ; being of the true faith, she thought he had no excuse for being boastful, pleasure-loving, thriftless, and regardless of the grades of society.

Violet settled down in her own house far better than an English Marquis's daughter of the present day would have done. Wrekin Castle was too far from London to allow of its owner, with a large family, presenting his daughter at Court. Trips to Switzerland, shopping in Paris, were then, for a poor nobleman's daughter, out of the question.

Malet, despite the Countess's dislike to him, was a good-natured, kind husband. The match was a love match on his part—no doubt gilded over by his bride being so much above him in rank, if not with the guineas, which, perhaps, would, as matters turned out, have been better for him.

Shortly after the marriage, when the couple had returned home, there was another gathering at Kingscastle. It may appear to the reader that our characters are always eating and drinking. Well, the Irish are a sociable race; and you, perhaps, see them best round the festive board. On this occasion the event was a dinner-party—an annual event on the 19th August, the eve of the old day for the commencement of grouse-shooting in Ireland.

The company included the Earl and Countess, Mr. and Lady Violet Malet, the Count Dijon and the Marchesa, Father O'Toole, and the Rev. Fitzroy Corbet, Canon of St. Sepulchre's and Vicar of Kingscastle. The Canon was a well-looking man, a fair specimen of the aristocratic churchman of his day. He was a clever man, loyal to his creed, good-natured, and generous. In his defence it must be said he was only Vicar of Kingscastle, and got merely the parsonage and lesser tithes. His brother,

the Earl, was the lay Rector, and with the greater tithes received the lion's share of the profits of the living. Next to Malet, the Canon was the best grouse-shot. At the annual shoots, for the first day or two he was short in the wind, and a little uncertain; but then at the end of the opening week his daily contributions to the bag formed a very good second to Malet's.

The dinner hour was, for that period, the unusually late one of six o'clock. This hour was fixed to allow of the Canon's arrival by coach from Dublin.

Young Lord Kingscastle—a handsome boy of about twelve years old—was home for the holidays, and in the drawing-room when the company met. He, of course, bore the patronymic of "Michael," or "Mick," to distinguish him from his father. The twins were brought in to show them to the company—the Hon. Stephen and the Hon. George Corbet—they looked, to the general view, exactly alike.

The poor Countess was greatly put out. In those days Irish ladies of the highest rank had to attend far more to household and culinary matters than at present. Wages to domestic servants were probably not more than a fourth of those paid nowadays. The "girls" were good-humoured and willing, and generally wholly ignorant of the specialities of their calling. The Countess had succeeded in training one girl, after a couple of years' careful supervision, to be a tolerable plain cook. On the morning of her dinner-party, Countess of Clara, though she was, she

descended to the kitchen regions, and found the cooking utensils not as clean and shining as her neat English ways thought necessary. Looking into a corner, where it might have been more prudent if she had not ventured, she drew forth a saucepan, filled with the remains of a previous dinner, and remarked, "Julia, this is just a dirty Irish trick."

"Your ladyship then," said the indignant servant, "may get another cook ; I will not stand any abuse of my country." She at once, with the thoughtlessness and recklessness of her nation, walked out of the house. The unfortunate Countess sent over for Lady Violet Malet, and they two, with the assistance of a couple of shock-headed, grinning scullery-maids, got the dinner cooked and served. The Countess looked tired and troubled ; our friend Violet radiant and full of banter with the Canon and reproaches for not going over to Wrekin to marry her.

The Canon inquired of his sister-in-law how they liked the new Curate. He was very wrathful when he heard he had not officiated for the last couple of Sundays ; and why was that ? he asked angrily.

The Countess replied quietly : " Because he could not appear."

" Could not appear," said the Canon ; " even if he was in debt (I heard he was hard up), he could go out on a Sunday."

" It is not that, poor man," said the Countess ; " his wife is ill, expecting a baby ; the youngest little girl had a bad rash, and Mr. Connor wiped her face with his pocket-handkerchief and caught the rash himself. They are honest, Fitzroy, and very poor."

I believe they have managed to pay their debts ; and if Mr. Simpson had eight, they already have six children, and are expecting another."

The Canon next day privately gave the Countess ten guineas to be laid out for the family, with the stipulation that his name was not to be mentioned. Father O'Toole had been supplying them with presents of potatoes all through that hard time in Ireland when the old potatoes were nearly all gone and the new ones were not yet fit for digging.

The party sat down to an excellent old-fashioned dinner, which did credit to the high-born cook. The chit-chat was very different from the present day. The Canon was always sounding Father O'Toole on Dr. Doyle's wide, comprehensive views about things ; and to his credit, they were in many points the same as his own. The Canon, however, differed from Bishop Doyle on the education question, being a strong advocate of primary denominational education. He also objected strongly to the prejudiced views (as he considered them) of most of his clerical brethren regarding Roman Catholics ; and, being an ardent churchman, was, in theory at least, not averse to Dr. Doyle's views on the unity of Christendom. The Canon listened to others talking, and was genial and pleasant, and, so long as the ladies were at the table, avoided all controversial subjects, describing Castle routs and drawing-rooms, much as a person of the present day would descant on Paris or St. Petersburg. The Count and the Marchesa when they wanted society went to Paris or Rome. The Earl and the Countess were poor and domestic, and the Countess

liked to spend her holiday in England. So Dublin gossip was new to them.

After the ladies had retired, according to the custom which had prevailed for several years at these annual festivals, Malet brewed a large bowl of punch. This may not be in accordance with modern ideas of total abstinence, which, as a system, was unknown then ; still, the drunkenness of the good old times, or the bad old times, as people may regard them, is probably greatly exaggerated. If more alcohol was taken eighty years ago after dinner, certainly there was less consumed in the way of "half-ones" and dram-drinking.

To return to our party. The Count rarely tasted anything stronger than light wines, and also generously supplied Father O'Toole with them, who, after his foreign residence, did not care about whiskey. However, once in a way, at these yearly sporting feasts, the Count and Father O'Toole joined with the others out of good fellowship ; and none of the party could be called a toper. Malet, on an odd day, might appear a little livelier than usual ; his unerring shot was, at the same time, a guarantee that he was no drunkard ; and the Earl and his brother were sober men.

Malet then chalked out their programme for the week's grouse-shooting, knowing where the birds were most numerous that season, and allowing for the heather and cover being denser and the springs better in some places than others.

The state of the country was then discussed, and everyone present was for law and order being main-

tained, though Father O'Toole had no sympathy with tithes, and poked a little fun at the Earl and the Canon about the size of the "Minister," as the tenth sheaf of corn was called, being much smaller than the others, for the Proctor's visit.

The Canon watched his opportunity, and started the unity of Christendom.

"Father O'Toole, does not your friend in Carlow advocate one great national Church for us all? I am heartily with him in that, if we could effect a compromise," said the Canon.

"Well, Canon," was the guarded reply, "surely you must know his views from his writings."

"Yes, yes," said the Canon impatiently, "from his great position and influence he must be cautious; in private life a man's real opinions come out."

Now Father O'Toole was naturally and by training polite and urbane. The Canon exposed himself obviously to the retort that what the Bishop told his old college chum was not intended for the outside world. He did not avail himself of his advantage, and replied deliberately: "A more liberal-minded, true-hearted Irishman never lived than the Bishop." He then added, with a sly, humorous look, and changing his voice to a more familiar key: "I am sure, Canon, he would be glad, as St. Paul said to King Agrippa, if you, in a little and in much, should become such as he is, except, of course, his *penal* bands. Your English divines are coming round a good deal, I believe. What do they say about unity?"

The Canon was a man of the world and a gentle-

man, and took the retort well, replying, "These men are only Englishmen, and we are Irishmen; does not J. K. L. want a Patriarch?"

"He does," said the Count interrupting, "provided the Roman Catholic Primate is elected."

"I give him credit for more liberality than that," said the Canon.

"Where would the representatives of the Presbyterians and Dissenters come in?" cried the Earl, who had no sympathy with his brother's leaning towards Roman Catholics, and, much as he disliked Presbyterianism, feared and hated advanced Church opinions more.

The Canon, unheeding the interruptions, turned to Father O'Toole, and, with a little spice of blarney, said: "And what is your opinion? you are always truly catholic and tolerant. Now, my view is for union of all Episcopalians, under an independent Archbishop, or Patriarch, if you like to call him; but I would as soon include Jews as black-mouthed Presbyterians or groaning Methodists."

Father O'Toole, after a moment's silence, raised his steaming tumbler—for they had reached the whiskey stage of the evening—and said slowly: "You think as I think, and I think as you think; for God's sake, drink your punch, friend Canon."

"And meet me, the whole lock, stock, and barrel of ye, at the top of the Castle at half-past five o'clock to-morrow morning," said Malet, suddenly bursting into the midst of the argument, and abruptly ending the theological discussion for that night anyhow. There was a general chorus of laughter at Malet's sally.

Now to Malet it appeared you might just as well reconcile an Irish terrier and a Norwegian rat as a good Protestant, which he translated "Orangeman," and a real Papist, which he freely rendered "dastardly Jesuit." He thought, then, there had been enough of this balderdash about "reunion"; and that the time had surely come for settling the real, practical, pressing question where they were to shoot on the morrow.

The Canon saw the subject had gone far enough, and, taking the rebuff in good part, turned to Malet, laughing, and said: "Right you are, Amby; business is business. Let us fix now the place and hour. As usual, old man, you will have the pull of me for the first day or two; then, when I have settled down a bit, I may have a look in."

"You are a rare plucked one, Canon," replied Malet, in intense good-humour with himself and the company; I will have you, my friend, just skin and bone before the week is out."

The party broke up shortly after, so as to allow an early start for the slaughter of the birds.

It may be here remarked, for the benefit of the uninitiated in the topography of the district, that "the top of the Castle"—that is, the highest point of the Castle Mountain—was a favourite rendezvous for sportsmen starting in quest of grouse.

CHAPTER VII.

WHO BURNT THE CASTLE HILL?

BEFORE the eve of the grouse-shooting in the year following the merry meeting recorded in the last chapter, Lady Violet died, leaving a daughter only a few days old. An aunt of Lady Violet was staying with the young couple at the time, and left for England immediately after the funeral, bringing the baby with her, who only survived her mother a few months. Malet was prostrated with grief. Even the Countess of Clara, who never liked the poor man, had always freely admitted that he was a most affectionate and considerate husband.

The Countess was over in England stopping with her brother, Lord Dartmoor, at the time of Lady Violet's death, which had occurred very suddenly.

In the same month as Lady Violet died the Marchesa's first and only daughter was born. Previous to this event the Dijons had had only one child—a son, a contemporary of young Lord Kingscastle, and called popularly Count Adolphe.

The Countess of Clara on her return home was in no humour to hold the annual dinner to inaugurate the grouse-shooting; and poor Malet was broken-hearted. So no dinner took place, and, as frequently happens when a break comes in such institutions,

there never was another such dinner given, although for a few years the shooting itself went on.

The Canon was the first to give up the sport, being made, to the surprise of everyone, a Bishop. He was very High Church, the very antithesis of Archbishop Whately (then Protestant Archbishop of Dublin), who, when asked whether he believed in Apostolical Succession, replied contemptuously, "Apostolical fiddlesticks !"

The new Bishop's time was devoted to his See of Ballinasloe, situated in the West of Ireland. He possibly, with the ideas then commencing, thought grouse-shooting inconsistent with his calling—especially with the dignity of a Bishop ; he was also getting very stout, and even walking in competition with Malet had not the same effect of bringing him into condition as formerly. He was an old bachelor, and took a great interest in his twin nephews.

The Earl gave up next, and he and the Countess began to live a great deal in England with the Countess's brother, Lord Dartmoor, who never married.

The Count Dijon then dropped off, leaving the shooting to Malet, his son, Adolphe, and Lord Kingscastle. The two young men were at first very submissive to Malet, who, though he did not fancy them, for their fathers' sake took great trouble in their training.

Count Adolphe got a post in the Pope's establishment, and spent most of his winters in Rome ; and Lord Kingscastle was gazetted to the Life Guards. Both, however, made a point of being at home for the

grouse-shooting. Lord Kingscastle began to bring young brother officers, and the Count Adolphe a couple of Italian friends. Malet resented this innovation. He never liked Lord Kingscastle, who sympathized with his mother in thinking poor Lady Violet had degraded herself by her marriage. Lord Kingscastle had, beneath a thin varnish of Eton and army polish, an aggressive, snobbish manner. As to Count Adolphe, Malet could scarcely put up with him; and he looked down on Malet as an impudent peasant. All these pent-up feelings were certain sooner or later to break forth. The occasion was one of Lord Kingscastle's friends happening to pepper a favourite spaniel of Malet's in firing at an old cock grouse. Malet swore at the delinquent in very broad and wholly unambiguous language. Lord Kingscastle took the part of his friend, and told Malet he forgot his position. Malet promptly called him an impudent young snob. Count Adolphe told Malet he must never go again on the Count's mountain. Malet replied he would let none of the party set a foot on his mountain, as the Earl alone had a right to shoot on it.

The incident broke up the party for the day, and for the season, as the quarrel happened to occur at the end of it.

In Ireland, whenever there is a dispute about sporting rights, everyone looks into the law; and, as a rule, no one believes in the law, unless it happens to be in one's own favour. It was quite clear the Count Dijon could warn Malet off the Count's mountain; but could Malet prevent the Earl's son

and his friends shooting on his mountain? Lord Kingscastle applied to the Earl's local attorney, who said it was a very nice point, and he must have counsel's opinion on it.

"You must get a good one," said the young Lord.

"Certainly," said the old solicitor, rather testily. "I would like Tim Driscoll, only he is unwell, and not writing on cases just now. There is a very long-headed young fellow coming on, himself a bit of a sportsman, named Beaumont; he will take an interest in it. I will try him. He managed an ejectment very well for me at the last Wicklow assizes."

A case then went to Mr. Beaumont, who wrote a very long, shrewd opinion upon it, full of law and worldly wisdom; but to the effect that the words of reservation, or regrant, as he termed them, of sporting rights in Malet's leases were peculiar and exceptional; and he advised a friendly understanding between the parties.

Lord Kingscastle disapproved of Beaumont's opinion, and showed his want of perception in stating that the promising Junior would never come to anything.

Malet spent no money on lawyers, and swore he would let no one but the old Earl put a foot on his land.

Lord Kingscastle purposely went on Malet's mountain. Malet warned him to go back; a struggle took place, and Malet's gun went off, wounding Lord Kingscastle slightly in the arm.

Malet saw the young man to the Castle, who, however, was not to be appeased. Feeling ran high

in the country. Lord Kingscastle was positive that Malet deliberately shot him; and Malet indignantly denied it. Proceedings were commenced against Malet, who certainly injured his case by leaving the country; and Lord Kingscastle, whose wound was very trifling, seemed to have the better of it. The quarrel arose before the 20th of August had arrived; and the parties, though they certainly carried fowling-pieces, were both too good sportsmen to have been out for grouse-shooting. Lord Kingscastle appeared to have been left in undisturbed possession, when an event occurred which upset all calculations. The furze and heather on all Lord Kingscastle's mountains and the Count's went on fire; the weather being unusually dry, the blaze spread rapidly, and all the mountains were left bare of cover and game.

That the fire was accidental no one ventured to assert. It commenced simultaneously at several places at a considerable distance from each other. It was plainly the result of deliberate design. Who perpetrated the foul deed was not so plain. Of course, Lord Kingscastle's side said it was Malet. Malet had left the country; and his sisters, who had returned to live with him, and a few servants were all who were left to represent him. These protested their innocence. Those who knew Malet warmly repudiated the idea that he would commit so unsportsmanlike an act.

The quarrel had one very disastrous effect. It created a serious rupture between the leading gentry and the middleman class. These two parties had

always joined in preserving what was called the peace of the country, and in keeping down the tillers of the soil, the occupying peasantry. It was whispered about that the Rathdrum Orange Lodge had been summoned hurriedly just before the incendiarism had occurred, and that the nefarious act was hatched then and there. The Orange Lodge was undoubtedly composed principally of the Protestant middleman and large farmer class, and the higher gentry only attended on state occasions.

The Lodge issued a manifesto denying such a slander, and asserting that malicious burnings, firing behind hedges, and skulking outrages were not to their taste, and warning no person to repeat such slanders.

Shortly after, in a crowded market in Rathdrum, Count Adolphe met the Master of the Orange Lodge, and sneeringly accused him of the burning. The Orange Master replied by knocking the young man down, who got up bleeding from the mouth; and, with a lesser number of teeth, and a sadder and, it is to be hoped, a wiser man, he left the town.

No one ever again brought the nasty accusation against the Orangemen, either collectively or individually, after this little incident.

One matter was perfectly clear—if the burning was bad for the game, it was good for the grazing, and from time to time friction had often arisen on the question of letting the heather get too strong.

A Methodist rented Count Dijon's mountain—a meek, decent, hard-working fellow, who was not likely to adopt the Orange Master's method of

putting down his accusers ; and it was hinted he might have been in it. To the Count's credit, he laughed at this solution.

Malet's sub-tenants, who were all Catholics, and generally against Malet, both for preserving his game and preventing them from burning the heather and the old grass, on this occasion did not conceal their delight ; and it was just possible they might have had a hand in it.

A party of travelling tinkers had been seen in the neighbourhood, and had lit fires ; but it would have required half a dozen gangs of tinkers to light all the fires necessary for this holocaust. The mystery was never solved, and will remain one to the end of time.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE IRISH PEOPLE.

FATHER O'TOOLE was a silent, though deeply concerned, spectator of the unfortunate ending to the pleasant reunions for the shooting-season in his parish. He felt greatly the animosities which arose between classes which previously worked in harmony for the general good. He was not himself a sportsman, so far as taking an active part in shooting. He was, however, as we have seen, a welcome guest at the social gatherings of all who took part in it, and he determined, if possible, to bring about an amnesty, even if there could be no actual reconciliation. After waiting judiciously to let passions cool down, he used his influence with Count Dijon to stop all legal proceedings, and to let Malet return without being molested ; and he met with success.

The Count was a polished gentleman. He had, in his early youth, seen service in the Spanish army, and, rumour said, fought several duels ; still, he detested vulgar rows, and he was liberal-minded enough to see that all the right was not on his son's side. He liked Malet, who amused him, was deferential to him, and never rubbed him up the wrong way. The two men were so unlike in character and position that they never clashed ; and if ever there

was a doubtful bird between the two; Malet always credited it to the Count, though, being the better shot, the probability was that Malet had hit it rather than the Count. The Count wrote to the Earl: the Earl came over, was furious with his son, Lord Kingscastle, and more than agreed with the Count's view, and the result was that Malet reappeared as suddenly as he had left, and all parties agreed in letting bygones be bygones. There could be no dispute about the shooting in the immediate future, for the simple reason that the shooting had been destroyed for several years to come, owing to the burning and the destruction of the young birds.

Lord Kingscastle resumed his military duties in London; and Count Adolphe returned to Rome to the Papal Court.

Another sad bereavement now took place, which banished all petty worries from the Earl's mind. The Countess died. She had been in failing health for some time; and one reason for the Earl's and her residence latterly so much in England was that it was hoped her native air might have done her good.

The Earl sent the twins to a school in England preparatory to Eton, and gave Mrs. Simpson, who had lived at Kingscastle as a housekeeper, a present; and she went to Australia, where some of her children had settled.

There then occurred an event which was received with consternation by the whole neighbourhood. The Earl shut up Kingscastle as a residence, merely leaving a caretaker to look after him and his sons

when they paid it a flying visit. There was a rumour in the country that he was hard up. He got no fortune with his wife ; had been an indulgent landlord, both to his occupying tenants and to his middlemen. They all, including Malet, had got numerous abatements. He also kept an open house, and everyone of every grade who called there got "a bit and a sup," as the saying is.

After a couple of years the Earl married again, and, on this occasion, a rich English heiress who had a country mansion in a midland county. He also became one of the twenty-eight Irish Representative Peers in the Imperial Parliament.

His second marriage, for all practical purposes, severed all social intercourse between him and his Irish friends, tenants, and retainers ; and he became virtually an English country gentleman, with a town house in London.

The disastrous effect of closing a place like Kingscastle can only be fully realized by one who has lived in the country parts of Ireland. Such houses are little centres of civilization and of great use in many ways. The English take the Irish too seriously, and imagine that because the landlord and tenant classes for the most part differ on the subjects of religion, rent, and politics, they must all, without exception, individually and personally hate each other. Nothing is further from the truth. No doubt, where, as in parts of Ulster, they agree in religion and politics, the ties are closer. Still the mutual kindnesses and signs of goodwill in other parts of Ireland between the different classes are happily far from uncommon.

With many things to retard it, slowly and almost imperceptibly, but none the less surely, an Irish race is being formed with characteristics of its own.

Why some races, joined under the same government, coalesce and become one race, and at other times, with apparently similar causes at work, each race retains its own individuality, is hard to explain ; but so it is. England became one, though there were different races in different parts of it. Highlander and Lowlander in Scotland united, and became one Scotch people distinct from the English. Wales has never been merged in England. Ireland will probably evolve a type of her own. The Angles, Saxons, Normans, Celts, and various other races combined to make the great English nation superior to any of its component parts.

The Irish found in Ireland by Strongbow were a mixed race even then, having, amongst others, a large Asiatic or Semitic strain in them. The English and Welsh invaders brought their own various nationalities with them ; and to these were added from time to time contingents of Scotch, Huguenots, Germans from the Palatinate, Spaniards, Italians, and other races. The close connection between Ireland and Spain, both with respect to Spanish immigrants and illegal commerce (in plain language smuggling), continued into the nineteenth century, and was strongly exemplified in the fact that the British Government gave the contract for supplying Sir John Moore's army with Spanish dollars to Irishmen, who collected the money by beating drums at the fairs and markets through the South and West of Ireland, and offered

inducements to the people to exchange their Spanish money for English ; and in this manner the contract was successfully carried out and the needful supply of Spanish money obtained.

The Italian settlers were not so numerous as the Spaniards ; still many well-known houses in Ireland trace their descent to that origin : notably, the Geraldines, or Giraladini—from whom the noble house of Leinster sprang, and whose influence for many generations has been felt throughout Ireland—were of Italian origin. It is to be hoped that the Irish type will prove equal to the best of the leading races of the world.

To return to our story. One great result of the termination of the sporting quarrel was a close friendship between Father O'Toole and Malet, not that they had not always, like most Irishmen who are close neighbours, "a gra" for each other already. He had never been stiff with Father O'Toole when he said a word for one of his struggling sub-tenants ; and he never left him without a bird, or a hare, or a rabbit in the season, and, now that Father O'Toole gave Malet a "lift" and arranged an amnesty, they became fast friends.

Father O'Toole was engaged in a very absorbing and interesting task—the opening of his new church. Of course the Catholic Archbishop was there, and many other Catholic dignitaries ; but the unusual feature on the occasion was the presence of many Protestants, most of whom had been contributors—a speaking tribute to the respect which was felt for the warm-hearted Parish Priest. Malet was there ;

and it was remarked that there was no Orange counter-demonstration, as too often was the case in opposition to any Roman Catholic religious gathering.

Father O'Toole had felt the death of his old friend, the gifted Bishop Doyle, acutely; and this red-letter day to him, the opening of his new church, brought home to him the many conferences he had had with his dear friend about it.

Father O'Toole was now, more than ever, a visitor at the Château Dijon. The Count in his early days had not escaped the flood of Voltairism which had swept the continent of Europe; still he remained a member of his Church; and, probably owing to the influence of Father O'Toole, was constant in his attendance to his religious duties. The Count loved his Parish Priest like a brother. Each suited the other; and this companionship reconciled the Count to a residence in Ireland, which would otherwise have been dull and irksome to him. Why he did not reside more of his time abroad was a question which was frequently discussed by the village gossips, and never solved. Probably Father O'Toole knew the reason; if he did, he never revealed it.

If the Earl's action in closing Kingscastle was a loss to the neighbourhood, the closing of Château Dijon would have been a positive calamity. The Count and the Marchesa spent money freely, and, on the other hand, having few tenants, had not the same reason for occasional unpopularity in collecting rent as the Earl sometimes had.

Father O'Toole made a pet of Angelica, the Count's daughter. She was a singularly beautiful child, like her mother, and yet so unlike. She had

an open, true expression, with a winning smile and a merry laugh.

Father O'Toole and the Marchesa just put up with each other. The haughty, repellent Marchesa acted as if she believed all the rest of the world had been created for the purpose of serving the *haute noblesse*, to which she belonged; and the only person she seemed really to like was her only son Adolphe. She adored him, and had opposed the good Priest in letting the shooting episode be passed over. She suffered the twins to come to Château Dijon, to play with the little Angelica. She left them and Angelica, however, mostly to the governess and nursery maids. As time went by, Angelica was sent to a convent school at Paris for her education; and whilst there she heard of the death of her brother Adolphe, of malarial fever, at Rome. The loving girl at once wrote home to her mother, offering to go to comfort her; and she got a cold refusal. The Marchesa bore her grief in silence: no one dared to offer her consolation; and it was remarked that it was Father O'Toole's Curate, and not himself, with whom she conferred about her deceased son and the rites of her Church. The Count felt his son's loss; but his daughter was his prime favourite.

The Earl rarely went to Ireland. The twins, whenever they visited their old home, stayed at the Château Dijon. Thornton, the agent, was dead; and the new agent was not only active in collecting the rents, but in getting in the arrears, which were paid with murmuring; and the wisest did not foresee the dreadful calamity which was looming in the near future.

CHAPTER IX.

DID ENGLAND AGGRAVATE THE FAMINE?

THE terrible famine of 1845 and 1846 has been frequently described with all its harrowing details ; and still no description of it, however realistic and vivid, can equal the recollections of one who witnessed it even as a young child.

In the middle of the eighteenth century a large area of Ireland was under grass, and supplied cattle and sheep to England in exchange for corn. After prices had risen during the American and Napoleonic wars, the inferior land of the country was cut up into small holdings, and every available acre of the then virgin soil was ploughed up. Traces are still plainly visible amongst the heather, high up on the Wicklow Mountains, where land was tilled by parties who took the chance of a favourable season allowing the crops to grow and ripen. The estimated population of Ireland in the middle of the eighteenth century was only about two millions ; in 1815, six millions ; and in 1845 it was over eight millions. This enormous increase, unlike the case of England, was in the rural population and not in the towns.

England during the last half century has been told a great many unpalatable truths about Ireland, not only as to her treatment of the Roman Catholics in

depriving them of their land, and also in trying to deprive them of their religion; but also of her breaches of faith with the Protestants in destroying their manufactures and commerce after she had encouraged them to settle in Ireland and form the English garrison there. The answer mockingly given to this is, it all occurred long ago—in the far past—in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries; but the wrong was repeated again in the nineteenth century, when England became alarmed at the cheap labour in Ireland underselling English manufactures; and a great deal of the cruel poverty of the nineteenth century, culminating in the awful famine, would have been averted if the United Parliament, after destroying the Irish Parliament, had not put a prohibitive tariff on Irish goods entering England. It is true, once steam-power became developed, England's coal-mines and minerals naturally, without protection, were able to compete with Ireland, which is deficient in both; but England is not satisfied to leave things to work themselves out fairly, and still fears Ireland, as a competitor which on her eastern seaboard has a proximity and access to English, Scotch, and Welsh coal superior to many parts of England herself, and has at least some coal of her own, and for electric and other purposes unlimited water-power.

This large, redundant Irish population was of invaluable assistance to England in her sorest need. The Irish peasantry are a warlike race, and they supplied brave, hardy, good-humoured soldiers to Sir John Moore at Corunna, and to Wellington

throughout the Peninsular War, and at Waterloo; and when a long period of rest from war came in 1815, if England had then encouraged peaceful, industrious pursuits at home for the brave fellows who fought for her abroad, kindlier relations might have arisen between the two islands; the clamour for Home Rule would probably have died out as it did in Scotland; and, above all, the famine, when it did come, would certainly have been less severely felt by a people who had other resources besides those derived from the tillage of small patches of bad land, the only means of subsistence of the greater part of the peasantry in Ireland, particularly of those on the western seaboard. England was short-sighted in her narrow selfishness, and the starving, discontented Irish emigrants fostered a bitter feeling of resentment between England and the United States of America, which has often since led to dangerous political complications between two countries naturally and, notwithstanding this source of danger, still happily bound to each other by the closest ties of friendship and goodwill, arising, no doubt, largely from their common origin.

The potato disease caused, as is of course well known, the Repeal of the Corn Laws. That plant essentially contributed to the food of Great Britain and Ireland, and constituted almost the entire support of the peasantry of the West of Ireland. Complaints were freely made that, at this time, the hard step-mother, England, thought too much of herself and too little of Ireland; and whilst the free importation of food was a relief to manufacturing England,

with plenty of money to pay for foreign produce, it only aggravated the distress in penniless Ireland. Undoubtedly for some years after the famine the fall in the price of corn impoverished the Irish farmer who grew it, and consequently the landlord ; but the increased trade of England, and the limited area from which formerly foodstuffs could be obtained, in time told on agricultural prices in Ireland, which was fairly prosperous for twenty years before 1878. The removal of the restrictions on the introduction of foreign cattle into the United Kingdom would in the present day be also severely felt in Ireland. Whether a subsequent rebound in prosperity similar to that which followed the Repeal of the Corn Laws is likely to take place, is not so certain. It is a melancholy but an absolutely true complaint the Irish of all creeds and politics make, that the international treaty agreed upon between Great Britain and Ireland at the time of the Union, regulating permanently the proportion of taxes between the two islands, has been broken; and a commission of experts, the majority of whom were English, has recently reported that Ireland at the present time is over-taxed two millions and a half pounds yearly. This is a substantial, not a sentimental, grievance. Such conduct is a shabby breach of good faith on the part of rich, powerful England with poor, weak Ireland.

To return to our story. "The famine was sore in the land," and the poor, small mountainous farmers of Kingscastle suffered grievously. Father O'Toole beggared himself in trying to relieve the distress.

The Bishop of Ballinasloe sent him money for the relief of the parish of which he had been Vicar.

Malet was at the head of the Relief Committee, and tried to bear up stoutly. He was, however, himself overwhelmed with misfortunes. His own potatoes utterly failed, his cereals were a short crop, and he got no rent from his sub-tenants. Malet, with all his off-hand ways and rollicking, sporting proclivities, was a proud man, and tried to conceal his difficulties. He secretly borrowed from the banks, and he borrowed from money-lenders.

The middleman has been the scapegoat for all the misfortunes of Ireland. He was a buffer between the head man and the occupier. When times were a bit prosperous, the head landlord complained bitterly of the folly and improvidence of his ancestor who let the lands on perpetuity leases at what he would call nominal rents. On the other hand, when times were bad, the head landlord would say his rent at all events is, Goodness knows, low enough. The middleman was proclaimed the blood-sucker, and the occupier recognised only his immediate taskmaster, the middleman, and until that go-between is squeezed out, does not concern himself with the head landlord.

All classes, including notably the clergy of every denomination, it will now be admitted, did their best; and if England as a government was hard and unsympathetic, the English people in their private capacity came out nobly.

Malet, with ruin staring him in the face, did his best to assist his starving sub-tenants and labourers.

At length, towards the close of 1846, he got the following letter from Messrs. Wiseacre & Son, a then well-known firm of Dublin solicitors :—

“ MR. AMBROSE MALET.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ We must again reluctantly call your attention to the frequent applications we have made to you for the payment of your head rents to the Earl of Clara and your promises to meet your obligations. We are bound to say you have met with the greatest indulgence. Your head rents are very low, and no complaint can be made of them. The Earl of Clara’s agent now blames us for our clemency to you in not instituting legal proceedings, as heavy payments in the nature of quit-rents, taxes, and interest on charges have to be met. It is our painful duty to warn you that, unless within a fortnight the sum of £249 6s. 3d., arrears of rent up to the 1st November last, with £5 3s. 4d. costs, are not paid to us, we must institute proceedings not only against you but also against your sub-tenants for the recovery of your holdings. We think it our duty to point out to you that for such apparently harsh measures against the unfortunate occupiers under you, who are now suffering from famine, you, and not the Earl of Clara, would be solely responsible. We have also to call your attention to the fact that the renewal fines, which became due on the deaths of the lives in your leases, have never been paid. These fines, as you must be aware, are, when not paid at the proper time, cumulative septennially, and now amount with

interest to an aggregate sum of £782 9s. 11½d. It is our unpleasant duty to inform you that if this further sum is not paid to us within six weeks from the present time, proceedings will be taken to avoid your leases, if your estate under them has not been already lost by ejectment proceedings for the recovery of your head rents.

“Your obedient servants,

“WISEACRE & SON.”

Malet, it may be imagined, was astounded at this blow. In raising money from the bank and from money-lenders he had completely ignored and forgotten the omission to renew his leases. The bank manager was his cousin. The combined arrears of rent and accumulations of fines and interest amounted to more than the value of his leaseholds, burdened, as they were, with a starving peasantry and enormous poor rates. He had exhausted long since all the money of his sisters ; he was, in fact, a desperate man. The Earl, no doubt, with his rich second wife, was rolling in wealth. Malet's grandfather, father, and uncles had acted as a bodyguard to the Earl's grandfather in the disturbed times, some years before the rebellion of '98. Malet still preserved the gun which, in a lonely pass between Wicklow and Wexford, his uncle had taken from a Whiteboy leader, and thereby saved the Earl of the period, felling the assailant with the stock of the man's own musket. Now, in his direst want, he was handed over to a Dublin firm, well known for its

correctness of calculations, courtesy of language, and merciless cruelty in carrying out the letter of the law. He at once, burning with the recollection of his wrongs, sat down and wrote to the Earl a long, somewhat rambling letter, which, however, contained the following paragraph which embodied in itself the pith of the whole epistle :—

“ My forefather, as a sergeant, fought under yours in Cromwell’s army. We, for generations, saved you and yours from the bloody Papists. You gave us no lease until my grandfather and his seven sons guarded your grandfather’s house in the bad times; and then you gave us leases which crushed and forced us to bind down the poor creatures who live under us. Now that we are dying of want, you send me an attorney’s letter for a sum of money which you know well it is as impossible for me to pay as the National Debt.”

In a week Malet got the following :—

“ The Earl of Clara is too ill to attend to business; in any case your insolent letter would deserve no reply. I merely write to warn you that the action of the Earl’s solicitors cannot be interfered with.”

This letter was signed “ Griselda Clara,” and was written by the Earl’s second wife. Poor Malet would have got a very different reply from the Earl’s first Countess, albeit she never liked him, or could appreciate the real good which was in the man

A week later he got from "The Palace, Ballinasloe," the following very different letter:—

"MY DEAR AMBY,

"I am truly sorry to hear you are hard pressed by the Earl's business men. He is very ill, and as poor as yourself. My sister-in-law does not know Ireland, and is too deaf to hear anything about it. She asked me a month ago, when I was over, 'Is it true the potato crop is bad in Ireland, and rents hard to collect?' Do not blame her if she seems hard. I cannot forget my old shooting pal, and the friend who saved me from the street-boys in College Green, too many years ago now. There are many ties between us, reaching back to Cromwell and the Boyne water. Accept the enclosed; I wish it were more.

"Ever yours,

"FITZROY BALLINASLOE."

The letter enclosed a bank draft for £200.

The strong man, on getting this touching reminder of an old friendship, fairly broke down and sobbed passionately.

The Bishop, in his loyalty to his family, told a very small part of a melancholy story. The Earl's father disapproved of his son's match with the portionless daughter of Lord Dartmoor, and made no settlement on his marriage; but as soon as his eldest grandson was born, by his will settled the Kingscastle estates on his son and grandson strictly for life. The property was also charged with por-

tions under his will for the old Earl's daughters, his younger son, Fitzroy, and another younger son. On his death, the Earl succeeded to an encumbered property. His second marriage was an attempt to get himself out of money difficulties. The second Countess was a hard woman; had her property strictly settled on herself; and resented Lord Kingscastle being put into the Life Guards; and the unfortunate Earl was plunged deeper into debt and ruin, trying to maintain him, and supply his own personal wants. The Bishop practically undertook the whole expenses of the twins. The Earl merely existed as a wretched pensioner on his second wife.

The generous gift of the Bishop was a mere drop in the ocean of debt. A receiver was appointed over the Kingscastle estates, with the Earl's solicitors acting for him. There is no use in going into melancholy details. Malet lost the home of his ancestors and all their buildings and improvements; the Bank lost their loan; the indulgent Manager was dismissed; Malet's sisters were supported by relatives in Dublin; and Malet emigrated to Australia, and became a shepherd on a run in New South Wales.

Malet's sub-tenants were left in occupation at greatly reduced rents. Their arrears were treated as irrecoverable. Malet's house was put in charge of a bailiff as caretaker; and his home-farm set under temporary lettings at very low prices.

CHAPTER X.

ANGELICA'S SUITORS.

ANGELICA returned home to the Château Dijon from her Convent School at Paris when she was eighteen. She more than realized the promise of her childhood in appearance and disposition. She being of the Spanish type was still like her mother, but less so even than in childhood; as she grew older, the striking difference in expression became more marked. She was rather tall for a southern, being about the medium height of an English girl, with hair as black as the raven's wing. Her mother was an Andalusian; and, resembling her, Angelica was exquisitely made, and had the gliding walk and graceful movements in which the Spanish girl excels all other nations. Her mother never loved her as she did her brother Adolphe. Adolphe was proud, ambitious, narrow-minded, and tyrannical like his mother; and their views on all matters agreed. The Marchesa was attached to her Church, and was intolerant of all other religions. She was not, however, devout, like her daughter, who returned from school with the idea of entering an Ursuline Convent. She mooted the question to her mother, who violently opposed it. She asked Father O'Toole, who answered gravely:

"Far from me, Angelica, to divert your thoughts from religion and a holy life; but since the death of

your brother, your first duties appear to me to be towards your parents."

The Marchesa had lofty views for her son: of advancing him in the political world, in Rome and Madrid, which, of course, all vanished with his death. She was proud of her daughter's beauty, and high-born bearing, though she could not comprehend her benevolent and unselfish, unworldly thoughts. On her return home, she tried to introduce her into society. She proposed to the Count to leave Ireland, and reside in Paris, Madrid, or Seville. He, however, convinced her, on political grounds, that his doing so was out of the question. The ambitious mother saw that it would be very difficult to procure in Ireland a marriage alliance at all commensurate with the exalted ideas she had for her daughter and heiress.

The twins were some three years older than Angelica; so very like, and at the same time so very unlike, each other. They were handsome, fine-looking, healthy young men. Stephen, the elder, was his uncle's favourite, and designed for the Church. He was intellectually clever; had gained many prizes in Trinity College, Dublin; and had obtained a Classical Scholarship. George, the younger twin, was idle, wild, and daring; and had just been gazetted to a Commission in the Rifle Brigade.

They were invited to Château Dijon, in default of better suitors turning up. Neither of them was the ideal husband the Marchesa would have chosen for her daughter. In the first place, they were the

wrong religion; and, above all, they were poor younger sons. Still they were of the *noblesse* class, and might divert Angelica from ridiculous fanatical ideas.

Angelica was happily unconscious of her mother's designs; and treated the two young men as old play-fellows, almost brothers. Stephen quietly accepted this footing. George, from the time they were children, protected her and worshipped her; and now that she had returned home in all the glory of her fascinating beauty, he adored her. He became desperately jealous of his brother Stephen. If, as children, George preferred Angelica as a play-fellow to any other girl friend, Angelica, in various ways, quite unknown to herself, showed a preference for Stephen. Now that they were grown up, George frightened her; rumours of his mad freaks and occasional drinking-bouts reached her. In a vague way, as a pure-minded, innocent girl, she shrank from his openly-shown admiration, and flew to Stephen, as it were for protection. Stephen's tastes and hers in many ways were alike. Both were eminently religious. He became deeply imbued with his uncle's high-church opinions. Both were fond of reading. He and Angelica talked of literary subjects which poor George could not understand. George never liked his twin-brother; and preferred Lord Kingscastle, with whom he had more tastes in common. George now began actually to dislike his twin-brother. Stephen looked over people's heads, as Father O'Toole remarked, and had no plots. He was reading for two gold medals in Trinity; and

often, when stopping at the Château Dijon, spent hours with Father O'Toole, studying geology and botany (tastes they had in common), and discussing theology.

Lord Kingscastle had some time previously changed from the Life Guards into a Line regiment quartered in India. His step-mother insisted on this movement, refusing to advance any more money for him. He was a dashing, rather wild young officer, but with less vice than George. News now came that he had been killed on the North-west frontier, dying, like a gallant young Irishman, leading on his men against the enemy.

Father O'Toole, from this time forward, observed a certain change in the Marchesa. She, in a marked manner, addressed Stephen as Lord Kingscastle, facilitated, as a woman only knows how to do, the easy friendship between him and Angelica, encouraged them to sing together, and kept his name before her daughter.

Father O'Toole was fond of Stephen; still, he would have preferred a suitable match with a young man of her own religion for Angelica. He had at this time stopping with him an English Roman Catholic nobleman, who joined Stephen, as we still call him, in reading, and formed one of a party for the grouse-shooting, which had been revived. This young man was invited to Château Dijon, and treated cordially by the Marchesa, who either thought him a better match than Stephen, or wanted to use him as a foil. He did not conceal his evident admiration for Angelica, and talked to his host about her.

"And why, Bernard," said Father O'Toole, "if you admire her so much, do you not try to make her your wife?"

"My wife!" exclaimed he in amazement; "I would as soon think of marrying the Virgin Mary; she is too holy for this life."

Father O'Toole replied gravely: "Ought you not, my son, to try and secure so good a woman for your wife? you, with her, might be of inestimable service to the Catholic Church in Protestant England."

"She would not marry me, Father," said the young man.

"Faint heart never won fair lady," replied the priest, smiling.

He left, however, without proposing, and probably the Marchesa, with intuitive perception, never regarded him seriously as a suitor, or discontinued her attempts to bring her daughter and Stephen together.

CHAPTER XI.

THE STARVING ACTRESS.

STEPHEN CORBET lived in his rooms in Trinity College after he had obtained a Scholarship, and was reading hard for his double Moderatorship. He loved good acting, however, and was a constant visitor at the old Theatre Royal in Hawkins Street. When he returned to college, after his stay at the Château Dijon, he attended almost every night at a series of Shakespearean plays. The company was very unequal. It contained a few bright stars; the bulk were unknown, and, as a rule, miserably bad. Stephen was greatly attracted by the acting and beauty of one young girl, who the first couple of nights took a minor, unimportant part, and then, owing to the illness of a leading actress, played in the chief characters.

He was entranced with her Ophelia. The acting he thought perfect, and her singing exquisite. She had a fine, clear voice, well trained. On the second occasion on which *Hamlet* was repeated, there was a crowded house, and Stephen witnessed Miss Gertrude Cavendish's triumph. He was amongst the last to leave the theatre; and, hoping to get a nearer glimpse of her, lingered about the doors.

The evening was wet and chilly, and by the time Miss Cavendish appeared, closely muffled, there were few people about. She was alone, and Stephen saw her cast a frightened look at an old man who came up and spoke to her, catching hold of her arm roughly; she shrank in evident disgust from him, and said: "You know I have no money."

He leered at her with a drunken, insolent face, saying, "My dear child, you must have some, since you took the grand parts."

"Let me go," she said, struggling, and looking at Stephen with an imploring face. "I gave you all the money I had yesterday."

"You can borrow, no doubt," he answered with a sneer, "from your young admirer here; I will not loose you until you give me a couple of shillings."

The girl said nothing to Stephen; but seeing the helpless look on her face, he caught the old man and pushed him aside, who staggered and fell. The girl moved rapidly away, and the old man got up and followed; when a coal-porter, whom Stephen recognised as Jimmy Cullen, a Kingscastle man, came up and said: "Master Stephen, I will hold him; get away with the girl."

The young woman staggered, and would have fallen, had not Stephen caught her and pushed her into a covered car which was passing. He then asked where they should go; she murmured an obscure street on the north side of Dublin. The car had scarcely started when Stephen was alarmed to see his companion turn deadly pale; and before they arrived at the house she had named she had

fainted. The driver knocked, and after what seemed to Stephen an incredibly long time, the door was opened by a dirty old woman. Stephen carried the girl in, and brought her upstairs, and laid her on a worn-looking old sofa.

"I never saw her like this before," said the old woman; "the poor thing has not had enough to eat. She will be all right now that she has got a handsome young fellow to care her." The old hag said this with a diabolical leer and wink at poor Stephen; and, seeing the frown on his face, continued: "I did not think she was inclined that way; you are her first visitor; I hope you have plenty of swag."

Stephen was about to make an angry reply, when Miss Cavendish opened her eyes, and her first exclamation was: "I hope father was not hurt; I saw him fall." Then seeing Stephen, she said, with a total absence of all theatrical effect: "I have to thank you, sir, for your kindness; I remember you got a car for me. I did not know you came with me"; and, then, with an effort at a smile, "please do not let me trouble you further."

Stephen came forward, and asked would he send for a doctor.

"Oh, no," said the poor girl, "I have no money to pay him. Did you, sir, pay the carman?"

Stephen muttered it was no matter.

"It is though," said she; "if I have little, I owe nothing."

Scarcely had she made this harmless boast when she looked as if she were about to faint again.

The lodginghouse-keeper, who appeared to be a

good-natured old body, brought her some tea, which she tried to swallow, and then she dozed off.

Stephen gave the woman money to buy nourishment for her, and left the house, saying he would come again and inquire.

"She will act no more, I am thinking, for some time," said the woman.

Stephen called the next day, and found Miss Cavendish in a high fever, and he at once sent a doctor, who, in his turn, got a nurse.

Stephen went to the theatre, and reported that Miss Cavendish was too ill to act. To his indignation it was plain the official did not believe him, and replied: "I thought she was a steady girl; there is no being up to them."

"What do you mean?" said Stephen indignantly.

"Just what I say, young sir; and as I ask you no questions, I refuse to answer yours."

He called a higher official, who at once, in consternation, jumped on an outside car and hurried to Miss Cavendish's lodgings, neither of the men taking the slightest further notice of Stephen.

Poor Stephen went away troubled. He was finding how hard it is to do a good action in this world without being misunderstood. Still, though he was reading for an Ethical gold medal (which, we may say in anticipation, he subsequently got), he did not complicate his thoughts with the reflection whether he would have mixed himself up in the poor desolate young actress's affairs if she had not been young, beautiful, and winsome. Stephen was a good fellow, and a warm-hearted Irishman; he could not

let the helpless girl, who had accidentally crossed his path, perish from want and fever. A great deal of the bloom, however, was taken off the peach, and he got a fearful shock when he saw her squalid surroundings—a coarse old woman, smelling of whiskey, her landlady; and oh! worst shock of all, an abominable drunken old sot, whom she called “father”!

Jimmy Cullen, the coal-porter, who came to Stephen's assistance, had been an under-gardener or helper at Kingscastle, and an admirer and follower, some years before, of Daniel O'Connell. The witty “Liberator” called the Dublin coal-porters his “black diamonds”; they acted as his bodyguard, and Jimmy Cullen was a leading man amongst them. He, however, also owed allegiance to the house of Corbet, was a gossip and a character in his way, and wrote to his sister, who was housemaid at Château Dijon, a letter graphically describing the part he took in rescuing Miss Cavendish from the clutches of her father:—

“504 LUKE STREET, DUBLIN.

“DEAR BIDDY,

“I hope these few lions will find you as well as they leave me at present, glory be to God for it. We had a bit of a strike for a day or two and we bet the Masthers, and got a rise of two shillings a week, and I send you an order for five shillings for the ould mother. Things are very dull since the Liberator's gone—the end of us all, Biddy; but I leave these things to Father O'Toole: it is not for the loikes of me to meddle with them. Masther Stephen can see

other pretty girls as well as Miss Angel, though she is hard to pass. Last Friday night I was in the gallery of the Thayiter with Con Ryan, and was standing outside, thinking I might earn an honest sixpence for calling a car, when I saw Masther Stephen in the peltin' rain, without an umbrel, and the divil a bit he knew it was raining, so I watched him just to see what was up, and presently Miss Cavendish, the great gun, came out, and one look from Masther Stephen's face showed me as plain as a pikestaff what he was afther. Before he could speak to her, as I suppose he intinded (why else was he there?), a drunken old fiddler, whom I seen strumming away in the band, or making believe to do so, came quite familiar-loike to the girl, caught hould of her, and asked her bould-like for money. I pitied the purty crathur when she tould him he had got all she had, and I am sure sartain it was too thrue, Biddy, for you would niver be seen at Mass at Father O'Toole's grand chapel, the pride of the country and of his honest ould heart, with the make-shift of the ragged ould cloak she had on her. Masther Stephen, for all the world like Masther George, knocked the ould sinner down, and I caught him and held him back when he got up, and Masther Stephen and his daisy went off in a car together. Now, what will Miss Angel think of all this? On last summer when I was at home I saw her look different on Masther Stephen to Masther George; and, as to that English noble who carried her missal to Mass for her, and whom Father O'Toole put up, he was nowhere with the Wicklow boys, Protestants though

they bees. I found out the ould man's name is John Banks, and father to Masther Stephen's honeysuckle, and Masther Stephen is paying a Merrion Square docthor for her, and a nurse; and the world is small, Biddy, for the nurse is Winny O'Carroll, from Glenmalure. I hope poor Masther Stephen won't ruin hisself. I am glad, though, he shows a little spice of the divil in him; if it was not for that, he would be too good to live. Rite me just a word how the Mother is, and whether the pains let her rest at night, at all at all.

"Your affectionate brother,

"JAMES CULLEN."

For the younger generation it may be here mentioned that the "covered car" in which Stephen brought Miss Cavendish home was the predecessor of the modern cab or "four-wheeler." It was no wonder poor Gertrude Cavendish fainted in it if the windows were closed. A Dublin humourist of the day was asked what he thought of it: "Why," he said, "I would sooner pay a man for kicking me than driving me in it." Still, in wet weather, it was better than nothing.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CONSPIRATORS.

GEORGE CORBET was devotedly attached to Angel Molloy. His love for her was perhaps the only elevated feeling of his nature. When a young man is in love with a girl, he suspects every other man of being also in the same way ; he cannot understand it otherwise, and he is morbidly acute to perceive any preference the object of his choice has for another suitor. George assumed that his brother Stephen was in love with Angelica. In this he was mistaken. He also thought—and perhaps in this he was not far astray—that if Angelica were inclined to any young man, it was to Stephen. If George had been told that neither Stephen nor Angelica had ever any serious thoughts of the other, he would have scoffed at it ; and yet such was the case.

Angelica had returned from France with serious notions of entering a convent. At the earnest request of her mother, and under the calm advice of Father O'Toole, she had postponed an idea which she had by no means given up, and marriage had never for a moment entered her thoughts. She wavered between a religious life and not forsaking her parents.

George was always plotting from his boyhood up,

exacting his full share, and wasting a double portion of all the good things of this world, and, at the same time, marring all his plots by an irresistible tendency to reckless dissipation. He gambled at cards and on race-courses. He owed money to everyone who would lend to him. He also showed great cunning and versatility in extricating himself from apparently hopeless difficulties. He was already a crack steeple-chase rider. He was the only person who could get the soft side of his step-mother, and get money from her. The Marchesa really preferred him to Stephen, though, of course Stephen, as now the elder son, was the better match of the two for Angelica.

George got leave from his regiment and contrived to get an invitation for winter shooting at Château Dijon, and soon heard the reports which were circulated as to poor Stephen's entanglement with an actress, and thought it his duty to inform the Marchesa. She took the information very coldly, and was not surprised, having heard it before from Biddy Cullen. He then impetuously plunged into the subject which he had at heart, and begged her help for him to win Angelica.

"And if you won her, how would you maintain her?" said the Marchesa.

"I have not much at present. My father is elderly, and a failing man; he cannot keep me out of the title long," he replied, with brutal frankness, and then added: "The lands go with the title; and I will have the Dartmoor estates also through my mother." He knew he had a worldly woman to deal with.

"Stephen is the elder," she said calmly.

"He is not," he cried, working himself up into a state of excitement. "I am the elder son. Stephen, I tell you, is my younger brother." He looked keenly at the Marchesa, and continued: "If I get Angelica, I will join her religion, and strengthen the cause she has at heart." He paused again, and, the Marchesa not helping him, he again continued: "My old nurse, Nancy Bradley, says I was the first born, and that she can prove it."

The Marchesa said carelessly, "Who would believe her?"

George replied, "Who is to contradict her?"

The Marchesa evidently considered deeply, and said: "There is some truth in that. Mrs. Simpson, at the christening, said Stephen was the elder; and on her word he was christened first. Suppose, George, you did win Angel, who is more obstinate than you think, and determined at present on a convent, could you be trusted with her? You would first spend all your money, and then break your neck in a steeplechase."

"I love Angel," he said, sincerely.

"I am sure you do," said the Marchesa; "but she does not care for you."

"I know that," he answered savagely; "she loves Saint Stephen, who is now studying an actress instead of reading for his degree."

"I do not think she loves him," the Marchesa said; "she just prefers him to you."

"She will get in him a penniless younger son, and an actress's leavings," he retorted viciously.

"Well, well," said the Marchesa, "if you are the

elder, you must prove it. What do you mean by the Dartmoor estates? Suppose you were the elder, how would you get them?"

"Because," he replied eagerly, "my uncle Dartmoor never married; and though the title goes to a distant cousin, the estates go to me; and since the coal has been found on them, they are of enormous value."

"I heard something about the mines," said the Marchesa; "I thought they followed the title."

"You were wrong there," replied George.

"We shall see," said the Marchesa, moving to terminate the interview "it was well you spoke to me. Be cautious about Angelica; do not be hasty with her. I do not agree with you that Stephen is thinking of her; and if she hears about the actress, she will lose her trust in him."

The conspirators then parted, with a kind of mutual understanding, neither trusting the other.

CHAPTER XIII.

ONE OF THE GREAT MEN OF TRINITY.

POOR Gertrude Cavendish was lying helpless at her mean lodgings, dangerously ill of a low fever. Dr. Greene, whom Stephen had called in, he had known from childhood; he was one of the foremost of the many celebrated Dublin physicians. He soon saw that the danger to be feared was exhaustion, arising from want of proper nourishment; strain arising from anxiety to be equal to the parts she was suddenly called on to take, and financial worries. The good doctor was a kindly old man, and a shrewd observer. He had an interview with the girl's father, and saw what he was; and he convinced himself that Stephen, though he might have behaved rashly, and without regard to appearances, had acted generously, and was absolutely clear of any base imputation.

Stephen had called frequently, had seen the father, and given him a small sum of money; and the old fellow had left Dublin with the company.

The manager had, on the whole, not behaved badly. He would have nothing to do with Stephen, who he was sure had evil designs; but he entrusted the few shillings owing of her earnings, which were

very small, to Dr. Greene, to expend for her, adding £1 out of his own pocket.

The doctor was a lover of the theatre, and had, before becoming her physician, taken an interest in his fair patient, seeing her act; and had met the manager at a reception, who had explained to him that Miss Cavendish had been engaged at the instance of her father who was in the orchestra, about a year before; that she had a fine voice, and had had some amateur training as an actress, and that she had shown great promise; still, until the emergency arose from the leading actress and her first understudy getting bad colds, Gertrude Cavendish had only small wages for very unimportant parts.

"Now," said the manager, "since this affair with this young nobleman, I suppose we shall hear no more of her."

"What affair?" said the Doctor; "the young man did nothing but protect her."

"Protect her from her old father! tut, tut, Doctor," said the other; "you do not know these people."

The doctor, in despair, gave up defending his young friend, and asked what was her father.

"A broken-down old roué, who knows music when he is sober. He was once an officer in a crack regiment. That is all I know of him. He is his own worst enemy," was the reply; and this was all the information the Doctor could get.

Meanwhile Stephen, unconscious of the plots against him by his false brother and the equally unscrupulous Marchesa, was now confronted with another danger—want of money. He had spent all

the ready cash he had in supplying nourishment and delicacies for Gertrude Cavendish, paying the old lodging-house-keeper, bribing her father to go away, and tipping the overworked servant to be attentive. He had also given Doctor Greene a fee when he went first to him, to secure his attendance. The doctor expended the small sum the manager gave him, and far more, on the nurse and other necessities.

Stephen not only had no money, but he had borrowed from a College friend. He owed his grinder, Mr. Mulcahy, for several terms. He owed for clothes. Stephen was not a spendthrift; still, he had been an Eton boy, brought up with luxurious aristocratic tastes, and he had the family failing of not being able to make both ends meet. He was counting now on getting his quarterly allowance from his kind uncle, the Bishop, and was glad to see his welcome handwriting on the envelope. When he read the letter, however, his joy turned into consternation.

The letter was as follows :—

“THE PALACE, BALLINASLOE.

“MY DEAR BOY,

“It was a great shock to me to hear that you, the steady one of the family, were actually living with a young actress, and maintaining her out of the money I gave you for your education. Of course, I do not condemn you unheard, and the very news that you are in danger socially and morally, instead of inducing me to throw you off, makes it the more my wish and my sacred duty to save you, if I can. I am

getting an old man. You were my pride and interest in this life. I felt that you belonged to me more than any other human being. It makes me almost regard it as a visitation on me for being hard on unfortunate George, and now am I to regard you as worse, being not only bad, but a hypocrite? My news has not come from College or Dublin. The only hope I have that there may be some explanation is that I had a letter from my old friend, your tutor, who expects you to get two gold medals—one in science and one in ethics. He says also you can speak well, and if you enter the Church will be an eloquent preacher. Are all these hopes shattered? My prayer and trust is that God may direct you in the right way. Your ever, no matter what comes, affectionate uncle,

“FITZROY BALLINASLOE.

“P.S.—I do not enclose a remittance until I get your explanation. Oh, that you may have one!”

“What shall I do?” exclaimed poor Stephen. To go to his tutor was out of the question; and in his despair he thought of a young man, not many years older than himself, who had taken kindly notice of him on account of the taste he had shown for experimental science. He accordingly made his way into a laboratory where he thought he was sure to unearth the friend he was in search of, and he was successful in his quest.

John Greatbrain had recently got his Fellowship on first trial, on brilliant answering, and was now, with his coat off and shirt sleeves rolled up, working

away, experimenting in subjects then, for the first time, coming into importance, and to which he gave the chief impetus. He was a big man with a big intellect, and, what was still more to the purpose for his visitor, a big, sympathetic heart. He looked a splendid specimen of his race, with a strong, kindly, intensely Irish face which could beam on you, if he approved, and could be stern enough if he thought you undeserving. Trinity College, Dublin, got such men by open competitive examination, free from all favouritism. May she never admit any nomination system !

"I wish to speak to you for a moment, sir," said Stephen.

"What do you want now, Corbet?" said Mr. Greatbrain impatiently, recognising the voice and not looking round. "I am very busy, unless you have come to lend me a hand, which you are well able to do"; then he added suddenly, seeing Stephen's sad face, "What is the matter, my boy?"

"The matter, Mr. Greatbrain, is," said the poor young man, "I am ruined, and I must leave College."

On hearing this, honest Jack Greatbrain flung away all his experiments, and, facing Stephen, said: "Tell me all about it; I will help you if I can."

These few kindly words let loose Stephen's pent-up woes, and he told the whole story, omitting nothing.

Mr. Greatbrain listened attentively, occasionally asking a question; and, on being shown the Bishop's letter, inquired: "Have you any enemy at home in Wicklow?"

Stephen replied readily, "I am sure I have none."

At the end, Greatbrain said cheerily, "I do not think things are as bad as you fear, and all will end well ; still, I am a Fellow, and must not run away with the case. I have (you must not be offended at my saying it) only heard one side. I will see Dr. Greene. Come to my rooms to-morrow early. Meanwhile do not neglect your work ; you have a couple of hard men to beat, and I want you to do it."

The next morning Mr. Greatbrain told Stephen : "I have seen the doctor and made other inquiries, and, instead of thinking the less of you, Corbet, I think the more of you. I thought you a bit of a prig, and that touch of chivalry in you, if not let go too far, will do you good. Mind, do not fall in love with the poor girl ; you would live to regret it. I do not know your uncle. The doctor does ; and he will write and tell him you did nothing wrong or that he would disapprove of. Still, I think it is better for you not to ask him for more money than your allowance ; by a little saving you can get out of debt. I will lend you enough to pay your debts. As to dear old Mul, he would not press you ; still, he has the hardest life in the world—that of a grinder—and only he did not want to forsake the religion of his fathers, could now be a Fellow and Professor of Mathematics, so I have included him in the cheque. The only question of conscience I had about it was, if it is right so far to keep your money affairs from your uncle ; he does not ask you about them, and you

will not deceive him on the point, and the fact of my lending to you will be hereafter the best proof that I believe in you, and you can tell him of that also when you meet. Tell him now everything in your letter, all you paid for the girl, and everything, except merely my temporary loan to you."

Stephen was greatly moved by the kindly, delicate way in which the noble-hearted man stood by him; murmured a few words of thanks, wrung his hand, and went away feeling that he must have appeared ungrateful.

About a week afterwards the Marchesa received the following letter :—

"THE PALACE, BALLINASLOE.

"DEAR MARCHESA,

"Your letter relative to Stephen grieved me much. I wrote to him at once, and in reply got not only a letter from him, but also one from a dear old friend who knew all the circumstances of the case, and I am perfectly satisfied not only that Stephen did nothing wrong, but acted exactly as I would have wished. Kind regards to the Count, and my love to Angel. Yours, &c.,

"FITZROY BALLINASLOE."

He at the same time wrote to Stephen, enclosing him a cheque for something more than his allowance, stating he must have been out of pocket, and that he was more than satisfied with him, and would see him soon.

Stephen went out at once and paid Mr. Greatbrain his debt, and thanked him then from the fulness of his heart.

"All I ask of you now, Corbet," said his friend, with a twinkle in his eye, "is to come out first gold in science." And he accomplished this.

CHAPTER XIV.

A LEADING DUBLIN DOCTOR.

GERTRUDE CAVENDISH got rapidly well. She had a splendid constitution. She was merely run down from the want of proper food. Worry of mind was the chief drawback. In her illness she raved about having no money ; and when she got well, the good old doctor thought it best to tell her the truth about Stephen's kindness.

"It is necessary," she said, "I should get well and repay him, and you your fees also ; the kindness I have received I never can, I never want to, repay ; it will be a pleasant memory always ; but I do not want to owe money."

The doctor did not intend to take any fees ; but he was too much of a gentleman to hurt her feelings by saying so. As to Stephen, he sympathized in a high-spirited young woman not wishing to be indebted to a young man.

Stephen called and saw her. There was a constraint and awkwardness on both sides. Gertrude could scarcely keep from crying, being still weak, and feeling overwhelmed by all Stephen had done for her. She, however, managed to thank him delicately for all his kindness, adding : "I shall want to know, Lord

Kingscastle, how much you have laid out on me. I hope to pay it one day, but not for some time."

He called again and left flowers.

The doctor now saw that change of air was necessary, and sent his wife to call and invite her to his country house. Gertrude went: what else could she do? It was quite evident to the discerning doctor, who had daughters, that her earlier surroundings had been very different from her life as an actress, and that he was not introducing foolishly a dangerous element into his household. The invitation to her was the best practical proof of his high opinion of her. She timidly gave him a short sketch of her life.

She lived near a country town in England with an aunt, Miss Banks, her own real name being Gertrude Banks, not Cavendish. She had been brought up with everything she could wish to have, and educated in the best schools in England and on the Continent. Her father visited her occasionally. Her aunt, just a year before, died suddenly, and she was left absolutely penniless. She lost her mother when she was born, and the only remembrances she had of her were a watch and chain and a likeness on a brooch, which she showed the doctor. The portrait was evidently done by a skilled artist, and was exquisitely finished. Nothing could induce her to part with these, she said, if she could only pay her debts by any hard work. Her father, when she first remembered him, was evidently very different from the drunken old sot the doctor and Stephen found him. Having spent all his property, he had been playing in orchestras for

some years, and introduced her, as has been before stated, into the theatrical company.

Stephen saw her frequently when she was at the doctor's house. Now, my young lady readers, if I have any, may here expect a detailed account of the courtship between these young people so peculiarly introduced to each other. The present is a telephone, electric age, and courting takes place far more quickly than formerly. "Had I but world enough and time, this coyness, lady, were no crime," applies to it, and to everything else, and novelists have to follow the age. The friendship, love, and engagement are "short, sharp, and decisive"; and the heroine discards her lover for another as easily as she changes her golfing costume for a court-train. It was not so with Sir Walter Scott or Jane Austen. *Die Vernon*—one of the most human and at the same time most picturesque of Sir Walter's heroines—had more coyness than is found in the modern novel.

But I must confess to my gentle readers—this, of course, being an absolutely veracious history—that in the case of Gertrude and Stephen there was no love-making at all, either slow or rapid. They became warm friends. Her shyness and oppressive feeling of benefits which she could never recompense him for, gradually wore off; and a sense of trustfulness, deep gratitude, and admiration imperceptibly took their place in the young girl's mind, and was reflected in her manner. Stephen intuitively perceived the subtle change, and then naturally the sense of guardianship of a beautiful, interesting, talented young girl, with a sad, chequered history,

became very pleasant. No love passages (I must tell facts, and not romance) took place; and they were rarely alone. "A pity beyond all telling is hid in the heart of love," writes Mr. Yeats; and these few words describe more truly and searchingly than a volume of prose the tender feeling gradually arising between Stephen and Gertrude. Stephen began by admiring and then pitying his lovely charge; and a warmer feeling replaced pity; as to Gertrude, her heart went out to her young hero and champion. How could it all have been otherwise? But their feelings were too deep down to be yet probed by them.

Gertrude was very independent, and was most unwilling to impose herself for long on the bounty of her kind friends. The doctor suggested a concert; and in concert-loving Dublin, ever ready to assist musical talent, a successful one was arranged and carried out. So full was the hall, it had to be repeated; and Gertrude found herself in possession of a sufficient sum of money to repay Stephen, and the doctor his fees, and have some balance left.

Stephen knew it would pain her if he did not take the money; the old doctor was different.

"My dear," said he, laughing, "it is only too provoking I am not beginning the world, for the reputation I have made by recalling you to life would make my fortune. No, I cannot take any fees. I would as soon think of taking them from my own daughter."

She did not press him further.

Through the connection she had made in Dublin,

she got a situation as companion to a titled lady in London, with liberty to sing at public concerts.

There was no sensational leave-taking between her and Stephen. The words which passed between them were very commonplace. He bid her good-bye, and said he thought she would have a smooth passage. There may have been (Gertrude was not sure) a tremor in his voice which meant more than he said. She answered quietly, "Lord Kingscastle, I never can forget your kindness. You will, of course, hear of me from our friend the doctor."

In those days of "prunes and prisms" no letter-writing was permitted between young people unless when actually engaged.

It is scarcely fair to pry too much into a young maid's secrets; still, we will confess, our brave-hearted Gertrude cried herself to sleep that night. This little weakness must be forgiven to the lonely, stray waif who was entering again into the cold, hard world, and leaving the cosy, warm corner she had found in it.

Though old Ireland has many drawbacks, she has some recompenses. A young girl can cycle from the Giant's Causeway to Cape Clear without meeting with any insult—on the contrary, receiving many kindnesses from the inhabitants of the various districts she may traverse. Her only apprehension need be that she may meet the roving vagabonds who tramp from one hospitable workhouse to another. "Idle house" would surely be a more appropriate name for any of these hostelries which tower above the squalor and misery of the smaller towns.

CHAPTER XV.

FATHER O'TOOLE'S SERMON.

GLENDALOUGH, "the Valley of the Two Lakes," has a beauty and grandeur of its own which defies comparison with Killarney, or any of the English or Scotch lakes, or those of the Continent. Its round tower and churches add a weird, mysterious, and mystical aspect to the naturally sombre scenery, and are thoroughly in accord with the gloomy waters enclosed by precipitous mountains. It is impossible to separate the merely scenic surroundings from the antiquarian remains of this ancient city of refuge.

On the 3rd day of June, in the summer following the events in our last chapter, there was assembled on the shore of the Lower Lake a number of well-dressed people gathered from the neighbourhood, and watched at a respectful distance by the peasantry.

The Wicklow girls were then, as now, justly celebrated for their bright eyes, clear complexions, and quick wits, which may be attributed to the sharp, healthy, balmy air of their hilly land. But if they do not change in themselves, their dresses change, and it would now require the pen of a Madge of *Truth*, or a Candid Jane of *Irish Society*, of that far distant period to describe their costumes. It is sufficient to say they were attired tastefully

in the fashions of that by-gone age. The party included many of our old acquaintances, notably Father O'Toole, of whom more anon. Count Dijon was there, remarkable for his out-of-date coat with gilt buttons and nankeen trousers, then still retained by some old-fashioned gentlemen. The Marchesa, in striking contrast to the rest of the party, was dressed in black, according to the Spanish habit, and wore a mantilla, which she usually did in summer, to the wonder and admiration of the country-folk. Her face, dark and handsome as it was, with well-cut features, was marred by a sinister expression which never permitted a smile. Angelica, on the other hand, had a saint-like look, which suggested to Father O'Toole an angel come down from heaven to bless the holy ground. George Corbet was there, hovering about Angelica. Stephen was in Dublin.

Father O'Toole was the promoter of this gathering. He had chosen the 3rd day of June for it, being the anniversary of the death of St. Kevin, the patron-saint of the place, who died there in 618 of the Christian era.

Father O'Toole looked a striking figure and characteristic of his surroundings. On great occasions like the present he discarded the ugly and eminently unromantic steeple crown and modern coat, worn by the clergy of all denominations in Ireland, for the picturesque hat, flowing robes, and white bands of his continental brethren. It became manifest as he reverently uncovered his head that his hair, which was black when we first met him, had now become snowy-white, worn long, and still abun-

dant. His tall figure was quite erect and still almost youthful-looking. His eyes were undimmed and sparkled with enthusiasm as he delivered his discourse to an audience of whom the greater part were Protestants, on his favourite subject—the influence of his beloved valley on the Christian world. He did not in any wise minimise his own religious belief, or, in a vain attempt at conciliating others, compromise the Church of which he was a priest; still, he dealt mainly with those aspects of the common faith which concerned and interested his entire audience. It would be impossible for us to give his address at length; and, even if it were so, the magnetic influence of the noble personality and sonorous, sweet voice of the speaker would be missed. We content ourselves with a brief summary, a mere echo of his words.

“My dear friends, all the human races acknowledge a Supreme Being, the Architect of the Universe and of all living things therein. This was the primitive faith, unalloyed by any worship of any grosser kind—just pure monotheism. The erection of temples unadorned by images was the first tribute to this universal, immaterial Divine Being. These temples were erected in India and Persia, and were the origin of the Pyramids of Egypt. Ireland got its builders from Persia, and probably was largely colonized by that great eastern nation. A Persian origin can still be traced in its name, *Irin*, or *Eriu*, or *Erin*, or ‘Sacred *Island*,’ which corresponds to *Iran*, or ‘Sacred *Land*,’ the ancient name of Persia. One of these builders was known and is still fondly remembered

among us in Ireland as the Gobhan Saer. He erected the older round towers; others were, from time to time, erected in imitation of them. This famous master-builder built them in honour of the Unseen, all-powerful, all-pervading Architect of the Universe; and such was this great builder's lasting reputation that other succeeding master-builders have been frequently called by his name, and have thereby been mistaken for him. These towers and the Persian and Egyptian temples, their prototypes, were the predecessors of Solomon's famous temple, the wonder and admiration of the halcyon days of that wondrous race, the Israelites, who were the descendants of the great Arab Sheik, Abraham. Jachin and Booz, or Boaz, the pillars of this great shrine, sympathized certainly in idea, and probably resembled in actual structure, our Irish round pillars or towers. These great towers and buildings were erected in honour of and not to contain God. To contain God in a temple made with hands is impossible. The wise Solomon knew that well, and declared it. God was and is unseen, a Spirit, not a creature, but, on the contrary, a Creator. He was and is omnipresent, from everlasting to everlasting. Mankind is finite and narrow, and yearned after what could be seen and handled.

"The protomartyr, Stephen, showed how the human race gradually degenerated into idolatry, and how they worshipped the work of their own hands, placing their dumb idols in their holy sanctuaries, and gave themselves up to worshipping the host of heaven, the celestial fire, the sun, moon, and stars. People adored what was created, and forsook the worship of the

great Creator Himself. That Creator is all-merciful, and He sent His only Son to save the world; and so God in His mysterious Providence, by the preaching of our Blessed Lord and His Apostles and by a process of development, is surely bringing mankind through a long ordeal of probation to worship the Triune God, as manifested to us. St. Paul told his fellow-countrymen their Mosaic law was their 'pedagogue' to bring them to Christ. That wonderful code was a great advancement on the practices, often degrading and revolting, of the old pagan religions, and prepared, not only the Israelites, but the whole world, for the pure, elevating religion of Christ. St. Stephen did not mean to condemn erecting temples for the worship of God. He only denounced substituting the worship of the building itself, or the material things comprised in it, for the Creator, in whose honour the temples had been created.

"God Himself, not man, was the designer of Solomon's glorious temple; and though we cannot hope to raise any future sacred edifice equal to it, it is our duty to worship God in buildings which show our respect for the Deity, in whose honour and for whose service they are erected. It is a pleasure in approaching a city, or even a small village, to see the temple of God towering above all the abodes of mankind. It shows that God's presence amongst us and the honour due to Him are not forgotten.

"St. Patrick and his followers—the bishops and priests of the Christian religion—found that our beloved Ireland, owing to the fact of its being so far removed from the influence of the mighty Roman

Empire, had happily escaped the worst consequences of the overthrow of that great power. Still, Ireland had not wholly escaped; and when the early Christian fathers evangelized us, they found the round towers used for fire-worship and astrology. They did not outrage the feelings and prejudices of the heathen people, but converted their temples to sacred uses.

“Our own patron, St. Kevin—the anniversary of whose translation to a better world and a better life than is here provided for us we are now celebrating—came to this valley as a barefooted friar more than thirteen hundred long years ago, and lived in a cave of this Upper Lake, in want and misery, preaching to and humanizing wild and neglected savages. I can fancy—like St. Paul at Athens using a heathen altar—our Saint using this round tower as a means to bring the people to the worship of Jesus Christ. When St. Kevin taught his hearers to revere Christ, he induced them to build churches for Christian worship, and to use their venerable round tower as a belfry to summon people to the praise of the Saviour of us all. He also prevailed on MacU’Thuil, the king of the country, to give free land on which to build the churches.

“In all humility, I must compare myself to St. Paul; and as he said he spoke foolishly and boasted of his genealogy, I must speak foolishly too, and confess I am proud of my descent from that great king who assisted and protected St. Kevin in establishing this holy city of Glendalough. Time will not allow me to give now the history of all the

churches ; we must visit them in detail, and with our living eyes learn the sermons in stone which they still so eloquently preach. The principal churches form the mystic number of seven: first, Teampul-na-Skellig, the earliest of them all, near St. Kevin's Bed; second, Reefeart, in which the MacU'Thuils were buried; third, the Church of our Blessed Lady, in which our Saint was buried; fourth, the great Cathedral; fifth, St. Kevin's House, in which he lived, and which contained his private chapel; sixth, Trinity Church; and, seventh, the Priory of St. Saviour's. All these churches were either actually built in the Saint's lifetime, or were the result of his energy and fervid zeal as a 'preacher of justice' and a winner of souls unto Christ. He accomplished still more. He founded a college—a seminary of mediæval learning—one of those schools without which in the dark ages not only our Christian faith and knowledge, but all classical learning, poetry, painting, sculpture, and the finer arts which civilize humanity, and raise us above the beasts which perish, would have been wholly lost.

"I hope I have not now, in trying to enlist your attention to these solemn ruins, merely succeeded in wearying your patience. God in His supreme wisdom, 'which surpasseth all understanding,' has allowed His worship to develop from a primitive, harmless, but unsatisfying belief in a Supreme Being, through many vicissitudes, into our Christian religion, which will, I firmly believe, in the Almighty's own good time, draw all mankind into it, when 'there shall be one fold and one Shepherd.'"

CHAPTER XVI.

"BY THAT LAKE WHOSE GLOOMY SHORE."

ON the conclusion of Father O'Toole's address, the more ardent antiquarians of the company inspected the antiquities with his assistance and that of the guides.

The guides of Glendalough have been always remarkable for great longevity, great knowledge of the buildings and folk-lore of the valley, and for great good-humour. Their longevity has assisted in their passing from one generation to another many invaluable traditions with respect to the former state of these sacred remains, the time of their erection, and the names of the builders. Darby Gallahoo, about the earliest of whom there is any record, is said to have lived to over 107 years. He was succeeded by Joe Irwin, Irwin again by George Wynder, and he by James Brough and Miley Doyle, known as Miley the Fish. Wynder and Doyle may be said to have died in their calling. Wynder over-exerted himself in running after a tourist's car, and Doyle in jumping a fence.

The reputation of the former guides is well sustained now by (amongst others) Pat Barrett, Denny Ryan, and young Pat Barrett, and by Edward Bolger, who in this unsentimental age has taken the

place of the Kathleen of our youth as the guardian of St. Kevin's Bed, and no doubt has saved many a life in ascending and descending to and from that famous cave.

The guides are the repositories of much really curious and interesting information still contained in no book ; and the teasing solicitude for employment, complained of by Mr. and Mrs. Carter Hall in their account of their visit to Glendalough, no longer exists.

Petrie, in his valuable work, acknowledges freely his obligations to the Glendalough guides for perpetuating by their traditions the true testimony of former ages.

There are, of course, two rival theories on the history of the round towers. One—that supported chiefly by O'Brien and Keane—is that they were of pagan origin. This view was the one put forward by Father O'Toole. The other theory—advanced mainly by Petrie, the late Earl of Dunraven, Wake-man, and Miss Stokes—claims for them a Christian origin. Whichever is correct, all admit they are, as archæological remains, of rare and absorbing interest.

The date of the erection of the churches can be more easily approximated to than the date of the round tower. There are also in the Annals of the Four Masters accounts of churches of which there are now no traces ; and it is certain that there were also many secular buildings and colleges which have all perished. The Danes burned or devastated Glendalough on at least eight occasions, ranging from the

ninth to the eleventh century. Even if, after these ravages, the then existing remains had been cared for, much would now remain to tell the tale of former years ; but until recently no care was taken to preserve the buildings, and their restoration has been a work of great difficulty. Still, our company could, with such a learned, enthusiastic antiquarian as Father O'Toole and his ardent assistants, form some idea of the ancient city in the days of its bygone grandeur, when it was the seat of religion and learning. They were able at all events to realize the sombre beauty of the locality, making a perfect natural background to the city and its sacred shrines. How far different, for example, would have been the dramatic effect of the Passion Play at Ober Ammergau if presented in a close theatre with painted scenes and artificial light, from the play as exhibited in the Bavarian Highlands, where it is acted in an open-air theatre amidst wild natural scenery of rivers and mountains! Equally so at Glendalough: the natural surroundings undoubtedly harmonize with the buildings erected by man, and intensify the deep impression they make on the mind. The gloomy Upper Lake, overshadowed by mountains and fed by waterfalls ; the peaceful Lower Lake ; the rugged rocks—all seem in character with the old-time ruins. Whilst, on the other hand, grander scenery, consisting of snowy mountains, huge overhanging glaciers, and roaring cataracts, would surely sink into insignificance the ancient tower and monastic remains ; and matters are often far worse in England or on the Continent, where the antiquities of bygone ages are shown in a

ploughed field or modern garden, and their effect is utterly destroyed by their grotesque and vulgar settings and belongings.

Father O'Toole had delivered his address within the cashel or wall which formerly circled the city proper. His party now inspected the slender round tower, still fairly perfect, except that then it was without its conical cap, which has been since replaced; our Lady's Church, or St. Mary's in the Field, outside the tower; the ancient Cathedral, the Domhnach-mór, the chief church of the city; and in the centre of it, St. Kevin's House, or Kitchen, called the Abbey Church; but they could not see, as it was then covered with earth and debris, St. Kevin's chapel of ease, as it has been named, adjoining his house. They saw also the Priests' House, where the clergy of the district were buried, called the library. They visited Trinity Church, then covered with ivy, and therefore called Ivy Church, and the Priory of St. Saviour's, called the Monastery, and on the Upper Lake, Reefeart Church and Teampul-na-Skellig, 'the Church of the Rock,' where St. Kevin worshipped when he lived on this lake. They were also shown many curious old crosses and objects dear to the antiquarian, and on which many theories have been founded for fixing the dates of various parts of the remains.

The only grain of comfort for the abandonment of these holy shrines as places for modern worship is that they now belong to all Christians of every denomination, and if they had been continuously preserved and kept in repair, would have been con-

fined to the followers of only one branch of our glorious faith. When St. Kevin founded his sacred city, there was no time for petty disputations. He created it out of the mediæval darkness ; and it was overthrown, as already noticed, by the Danes, who were not then troubled with religious scruples of any sect or religion.

Most of our party, after examining the various objects of interest, partook of luncheon, at Father O'Toole's invitation, in the open air, close to the principal inn.

Irish hotels or inns have been most unfairly cried down. The Irish, like the Tyrolese, have a real faculty for innkeeping ; they are naturally hospitable, cheery, and genial. Owing to want of visitors, until lately, their hotels or inns were not up to date ; still, the welcome was there, unless the visitor belittled the capabilities of the house or its entertainment, or sneered at our national susceptibilities. A few years before Father O'Toole's meeting the inn at Glendalough was more a house of mourning for people attending funerals than a house of call for tourists ; and on one occasion, when a tired, belated traveller was retiring to rest, he found a corpse concealed in his bedroom, which had been hastily removed from the bed itself to make way for him, there being no more room in the inn. No one need fear such unpleasant ghosts in the cupboard now at Glendalough, where there are several extremely good hotels. May we hope that the vandal hand of no enterprising speculator will erect a towering skyscraper, and banish all romance from this sacred corner of far distant ages!

Father O'Toole's light refreshment did not end the day's enjoyment. Parties scattered, some to visit St. Kevin's Bed, others for a row on the lake. Poor Angelica, without knowing exactly how it came about, found herself in a boat alone with George Corbet.

Now, if a young man wishes to propose to a young woman, a boat on a stormy lake is not, unless the suitor wants to force a hearing on an unwilling girl, the best place for it. Probably in a year far more proposals are made on the banks of the rivers of Dublin alone, that is the Liffey and the Dodder—the Abana and Pharpar of Dublin—than in boats on all the lakes of Ireland added together. There are most romantic walks by the Liffey, and the Dodder is not to be despised for love's pleadings; still, on a river's bank the fair maiden must be at all events willing to hear her suitor's burning words, even if not inclined to be won by them; she can escape if she likes. On a lake, alas! the poor creature is helpless; and if the tables had been turned, and love-sick Kathleen had only been able to inveigle St. Kevin into a boat, the fatal tragedy of that fictitious romance might have been averted.

Poor Angelica knew well, once she became a prisoner, what she had to listen to. Had it come wholly unexpectedly, she would have been a most uninteresting heroine; she would have been merely a fool. She did expect a declaration, but could not prevent it. Her mother had no personal influence on her mind; there was no sympathy between them. So far, however, as managing to give this chance to

George, Angelica was helpless in her mother's hands. To refuse to enter the boat with her old friend from childhood, who was stopping at her parents' house, would have been rude and ungracious, and Angelica suffered her lot quietly. George Corbet rowed swiftly out into the centre of the Upper Lake, keeping as far away as possible from other boats. He was passionately in love with the girl, but he had no idea of her character. He imagined that she was an ignorant Roman Catholic, who would hail his conversion to the true faith as a triumph, and who would be tempted with a prospective coronet and great riches added to her own. Many men equally in love might have gauged her character better; but to do so, it would be necessary at least to be in sympathy with her pure, unalloyed Christianity and her lofty, unselfish views of life. He also entirely mistook her strength of mind and the proud spirit dormant in her, which, when roused on a proper occasion, could flash forth with all the force derived from her noble birth.

The Upper Lake of Glendalough is unique of its kind; it is encircled with mountains, except on the side next the Lower Lake; Derrybawn and Lugduff mountains are on the south side, and Lugduff contains the cave known in prosaic English as St. Kevin's Bed, and in sonorous Irish as "Leaba Caomhghin"; and opposite, on the north side, is the less precipitous mountain of Camaderry. The clearest day in summer there is a sad, gloomy hue over this lake, and the water is often rough and boisterous. This day, though unusually bright, some clouds came

up, and Angelica, trying to escape, said with an imploring face : " It looks threatening, George ; ought we not to return ? "

" There is something I have to say to you first, Angel," he replied almost fiercely ; " something long in my mind."

" Pray, pray, George, do not say it here," poor Angelica said : " let us return ; you will have plenty of time afterwards."

" No, no ; there is no time like the present ; you must hear it now. I love you, Angel ; I want you to be my wife."

" Stop ! stop ! " she cried ; " I am the bride of Heaven ; it cannot be."

" But it must be ; and hear me you must—you shall hear me. I will become a Catholic for your sake. I will be Earl of Clara, rich and powerful, and you will be a Countess. You can take your place with the best in the land ; and you will have me, your husband, always devoted to you." Then, seeing a terrified look on her face, which speakingly showed that his words were of no avail, he added brutally : " You would reject me to marry that sneaking hypocrite of a brother of mine, who professes to be a divinity student, and spends his uncle's money on an actress. By all that is sacred, you must marry me. If he dare to cross my path, it will be the worse for him."

George Corbet had overshot the mark. So long as he dwelt on his love for Angelica he had that sympathy which every woman has for a man she believes truly loves her, though she knows that she

does not, and never can, love him. The stereotyped answer often given by a good-natured girl to a disappointed wooer, that he has paid her the greatest compliment a man can pay a woman, has become a hackneyed phrase because it is so true, and no woman can disregard it altogether. The offer to change his religion, in the same way in which he would change his coat, was abhorrent to her; his prospect of being Earl of Clara, and rich, she could not comprehend; but when he tried to make capital out of what she believed was poor Stephen's fall, she felt a loathing for him, which gave her strength, made her disregard her defenceless position, and display a lofty courage which had only needed to be roused thoroughly to assert itself. Angelica had certainly not the Madonna-like expression of face which was usual to her, when, with her splendid dark eyes flashing like flames of fire, she replied to George Corbet's threat:

"It is unmanly and inhuman for you with a defenceless girl in your power to insult her by what you call an offer of marriage. We have been taught in our Church that it was a sin for the poor western peasants, when dying of starvation, to pretend to change their holy religion for food, and a still greater crime for others to tempt them to do it; but for you, who ought to have the feelings of a gentleman, to attempt to degrade me to your own level by the contemptible bribe of offering to change your religion to win me, shows evidently you think me as base and contemptible a creature as yourself. What you mean by saying you will be Lord Clara, I do not understand. As to your attacks on your brother, you

are worse than Cain. He slew his brother in a fit of passion; you deliberately try to destroy your brother's good name. I tell you I do not believe your insinuations. I am sure now they have been invented by you, the lowest and most treacherous of your many base acts."

George, writhing under these lashes, looked capable of committing any crime, and, shipping his oars, made as if to catch her hand; and she, at once standing up, cried loudly: "If, coward as you are, you do not at once row me ashore, I will throw myself into the lake."

He resumed the oars, evidently thought better of whatever desperate idea he had entertained, and said, with a bitter, sardonic smile: "I will be revenged on you, you little spitfire, through that brother of mine. If I am to have the brand of Cain, I may as well get something for it."

All through the scene, and even then at the last of it, Angelica did not realize the full meaning of his threats, beyond that he hated his brother, and intended to do him some deadly injury. He rowed her to the landing-stage in silence, and she at once sought out her friend, the good old priest, the Marchesa standing by and not apparently noticing her. The company soon after reassembled, and the party broke up.

CHAPTER XVII.

DO THE CATHOLICS REALLY HATE THE PROTESTANTS?

THE Marchesa had, as may be supposed, a long talk with George Corbet over his proposal to Angelica in the boat at Glendalough, and entirely disapproved of his tactics.

"You have now," she said, "shown your hand without doing yourself any good."

"She would never have favoured my suit; she loves that brother of mine," he answered savagely.

Now, strange as it may appear, the Marchesa had by no means given up her scheme. She really had persuaded herself she was benefiting her religion by capturing a future rich Earl for her Church; and knowing Angelica to be devotedly attached to her faith, and thinking she would be prepared to make any sacrifice to strengthen its cause, she, with that obstinate, narrow-minded pertinacity which with some people takes the place of real strength of character, was more resolved than ever on bending her daughter's will to her own. She perceived that she need not reckon on Father O'Toole; and, on the contrary, she knew he had in his possession a book with an entry of the baptism of the twins, and she thought this would be of vital importance in frustrating the vile fraud she was joined with George in

committing. It was not hard to raise George's spirits. She advised him to apologize to Angelica, and plead as his excuse his devotion for her, but not to press his suit again until a turn came in his favour.

George was full of contrition. When he cooled down, he had cunning enough, if not good sense or feeling, to see he had not only lost his temper and made himself ridiculous, but lowered himself beyond all calculation in the eyes of the only woman he ever passionately adored. Though he spoke bitterly, she never looked so entrancingly and provokingly beautiful as when he believed, for the time, he had irretrievably lost her. He, like the Marchesa, was more determined than ever to conquer her, as he had now, joined to a genuine, honest love which any youth may properly have for a winsome maiden, a fierce obstinacy not to be beaten in a hopeless race—a recklessness which is often mistaken for real pluck and manly courage. He never could win on a race-course, because he always persisted in backing a horse he once favoured against all judgment and reason. He could not understand the elevated nature of Angelica's religious feeling, which shrank from the mere suspicion of worldly aggrandisement sullyng her pure, unworldly love for her holy Church, which in its fervid zeal resembled the deep devotion which the Blessed Mother of our Lord felt for her sinless Son, who is our Redeemer. Such thoughts were completely beyond him. He knew she was a good woman; still, he thought her capable of having her inclinations swayed by the ordinary motives of our narrow human thoughts; and though he, for a time,

kept them in the background, he believed he would in the end successfully attract her by the prospect of the dazzling social position of being the Catholic Countess of a wealthy converted Catholic Earl in Protestant England, and easily first amongst the Catholic peeresses of a nation that had forsaken the true religion for a Philistine Protestantism.

The Marchesa gave George the opportunity of catching Angelica alone the next morning after the fête, and he said humbly, and we hope with a real touch of contrition: "Angel, I apologize in the dust for my unmanly and brutal behaviour yesterday; do not [seeing her shrink back] fear I am about to worry you again. Show the sweetness of your angelic nature by forgiving one who cannot help worshipping you, and lost his reason when he saw he could not gain your love. Forget, dear friend—I may at least call you by that name if no other—my madness. Be my friend, Angel, and do not drive a desperate man to desperate courses to drown his grief. You were once my playfellow; let us resume the old relations of boy and girl which we had, before I dreamed of the possibility of closer ties."

Angelica had had time also to regret her loss of temper. If ever there is an occasion when it is justifiable for a young maid to fly into a passion, it is surely when a lover takes such unworthy advantage of a girl's helpless position as in a row-boat on a lake. The poor pure-minded young woman lay awake the greater part of the night after the proposal, vainly blaming herself for some of the hard things she had uttered, without knowing how near

the real truth she had gone ; she never then suspected the foul plot her mother and George had hatched, or the meshes in which they were resolved to entangle her. She blushed with shame at her defence of Stephen, seeing, in her ardour in his cause, she had given George an opportunity of justifying his accusation that she was in love with a man whom she knew instinctively did not love her. Of course, she deluded herself that she was only shielding Stephen when he was not present to defend himself. Still, she felt that she had no proof whatever that George was the author of the stories about the actress, be they true or false ; and she had to admit they looked only too true against his brother. She felt put in the wrong by George's carefully prepared and apparently artless self-abasement. She committed the error of too quickly and completely wiping out a really dastardly and cowardly attempt to seize an unwarranted advantage. She humbly faltered, "I forgive you, George : I was to blame myself."

"Then it is all right, Angel," he answered laughing ; and gently and respectfully taking her little hand, he gallantly and reverently kissed it. Angelica made no resistance, and the quarrel appeared to be over, and she—for she had no duplicity or doubleness of thought—determined to try and blot it out of her memory. George, after a terrible blunder in tactics, had, instead of losing, actually gained some ground with the gentle, amiable, unselfish girl, who shrank from wounding anyone's feelings, least of all those of a man she knew really loved her ; and she delighted her mother and George by more than

renewing the terms of easy good comradeship which had previously existed between her and the young man.

The Count had never suspected that anything unusual had arisen, and unconsciously played into the hands of the two conspirators by proposing that George should take his place and accompany Angelica on horseback to an archery meeting in the Vale of Ovoca, saying : " I am sure, George, you will kindly look after the horses, and you will not require a groom at Castlemore House ; there will be plenty to take them off your hands there."

What could poor Angelica do but remain silent ? George, of course, accepted the responsibility quietly but readily, and got thanked for it by the Count.

Angelica did not like it at all. Still, no one could have been nicer than George in his conduct towards her. He did not in the faintest way try to renew his suit ; on the contrary, he talked on subjects which might be listened to by anyone, and withal, with an indescribable touch of tenderness and remorse in his manner and voice for having revealed his undoubted love to her, which he could not have assumed with bystanders, and which he carefully omitted at the archery meeting, where he prudently abstained from making Angelica in the least remarkable by over-attention, he himself chatting briskly with other girls.

Angelica was a splendid horsewoman, and fond of horses ; and she and George had, at all events, these tastes in common. They had now many outings together. George was a clever fellow, and, though not of the high intellectual calibre of Stephen, and

without college education, he was a fairly well-read man. Angelica loved horses, dogs, and all animals ; and when other subjects failed, they could fall back on field-sports.

George, then, was able to make himself agreeable to her. The Marchesa congratulated him on his success, and thereby only deceived him and herself. Angelica meant what she said at their reconciliation, and gave George credit for being thoroughly genuine when he promised not to renew his suit. She was very lonely at the Château, and did not dislike having an agreeable companion, when he did not make love to her. Love him she could not. She did not allow to herself that she loved Stephen, who did not love her ; and after the first painful thoughts of having defended him too ardently had passed away, he was not at this time much in her mind. She was a blithesome young girl without a thought of prudery, and it never entered her head that she was in any way giving fair grounds for whispers that Miss Angel and Master George were looking very much as if they were making a match. The Marchesa never lost an opportunity of dropping stray remarks derogatory of Stephen, which Angelica could not refute ; and, after betraying her partiality for him to his brother, she shrank from showing her mother that she would be his advocate if she could ; and, as regards poor Stephen, the wily mother made way, as Angelica became gradually convinced her old friend was hopelessly ruined by his wrong infatuation for the bewitching actress. The Marchesa did not achieve the same success in turning her mind

favourably towards George. Still, she made some headway even in that direction. The following is a sample of one of the conversations which the mother had with her only daughter when they chanced to be alone together :—

“ I am glad to see, my darling, you are kinder than you were to poor George. There is one thing, at all events, Angel : he worships you ; and I would be an unnatural woman if his doing so did not count in the young man’s favour. George and I agree on one subject : you are the beginning and end of all our thoughts.”

“ Mamma,” said Angelica, gravely, “ he is very good ; he never worries me since that day on the lake.”

“ You were hard on him then,” the astute Marchesa said. “ He did nothing wrong ; surely, if the poor fellow chooses to be a convert to the true, the only true, Church, such a religious girl as you are ought not to scorn him for so doing.”

“ You are wrong, mamma,” replied poor, puzzled Angel ; “ I would like all to belong to our Church, but not for unworthy objects.”

“ I do not consider being fond of my darling daughter an unworthy object, Angel,” said her mother ; “ go now and enjoy a ride after the beagles, and do not worry your little head.”

Angel went off, and found George very respectful and very helpful.

George, in the most natural way, accompanied his host and the Countess and Angelica to Father O’Toole’s handsome church. This did not look very

odd, as it was tolerably near Château Dijon, and the Protestant church was a long way off.

A circumstance now happened which favoured the Marchesa's designs. Father O'Toole's old housekeeper died, and she suggested Nancy Bradley as her successor. Nancy Bradley had been George Corbet's foster-mother. Her own infant, who was contemporary with George, had died; and she idolized George as if he were her own son. Even before George saw he could make use of this woman, to give the man credit where credit is due, he had been kind to Nancy; she was kept on at Kingscastle until it was closed, and was then, notwithstanding the Earl's narrow means, very liberally pensioned. She was a widow, and lived with a married sister. She bore a good character, and Father O'Toole engaged her as his housekeeper.

With Nancy the wish was father to the thought; and as George had told the Marchesa at their original secret treaty and unholy alliance, Nancy was prepared to swear George was the first-born.

How far at this time Father O'Toole had discerned the Marchesa's plots, it is hard to discover, except subsequent events showed. He had not then the faintest suspicion of the diabolical plot to oust Stephen from his just inheritance. He, of course, saw the opportunities the Marchesa facilitated for bringing George and his pet, Angelica, together; and he saw him attending his new church, though he did not partake of the Sacrament, and was merely a spectator, and nothing was said as to his changing his religion. Father O'Toole did not make

him free of his house ; and much as the Marchesa managed and George schemed, he never got the footing there his brother Stephen gained.

Father O'Toole was getting an old man, and never was a plotter. The Roman Catholic secular clergy are zealous for their own religion, and resent proselytism by the Protestant clergy ; there never has been apparent, however, in the rural districts of Ireland, any general instigation by the Roman Catholic priesthood of their flocks against the Protestants. Roman Catholic churches are at least as often robbed, desecrated, or broken into as Protestant churches ; and the rural Roman Catholic laity treat the Protestant clergy with personal respect. Any signs also of aggressive hostility of the Roman Catholics of the lower classes to Protestant ministers are almost wholly confined to the large towns, where the personal influence of their own clergy is notoriously weaker than in country districts.

What view Father O'Toole had with regard to poor Stephen and his supposed backslidings, he kept to himself. No one ever traced ill-natured stories to this good-natured Christian priest and fine old Irish gentleman. Outside his own particular duties, now that his new church was finished and open, his principal object at that period seemed to be to try and preserve the old ecclesiastical remains at Glendalough from becoming lost and obliterated, owing to the weather and the wish of visitors to carry away tokens of departed glories.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE MAKING OF THE PROTESTANTS.

LORD KINGSCASTLE, as we may still sometimes call him, notwithstanding the plots to deprive him of his heritage, was duly ordained for a curacy in a leading Dublin parish.

For a time everything went on as well as his fond uncle could wish, and Stephen's success far surpassed the Bishop's expectations. It cannot be denied that the heirship to an ancient title, and a handsome face and fine, manly presence, did a great deal in securing him a favourable reception in his cure, and in Dublin generally. His rector was an amiable old man, a cousin of an influential peer, who had got the living early in life, and could not be accused of being high-church or low-church. The only decided view he seemed to have was against any change. He grumbled against the church being done up, though at the expense of a rich member of the congregation. He opposed, in a feeble way, a collection to substitute a handsome, well-toned organ for an old hurdy-gurdy, which resembled for all the world a barrel-organ out of tune through exposure to the weather. The new organ, however, was triumphantly installed. If he had known whom he was getting, doubtless he would never have taken Stephen. Being an aristocrat himself, he, however, was inclined

to Stephen ; and his wife, a daughter of a leading country gentleman, a haughty woman, and one who walked with her head in the air, sniffing at any society below the highest, was really the person who secured the curacy for Stephen, and certainly would not have objected if he had married her youngest daughter, an attractive girl, who had just been presented at Dublin Castle, and was intended to be presented further on at the Queen's drawing-room in London, to make her position in society doubly sure and unimpeachable.

Stephen's zeal almost equalled that of the proto-martyr ; and though it did not lead to such tragic consequences, caused his ultimate downfall. He had a devoted lady-helper in his Rector's daughter, who, though willing to take her fitting rank in the world, was high-church, and given to good works. He and she organized a ladies' Bible class, which emptied those of all the surrounding churches ; and this was partly on the merits. He had fresher ideas, was a novelty, was well read, and had a facility of exposition. As a preacher, Stephen had crowded congregations. He had a good, pleasant, and, at the same time, powerful voice, a remarkable gift of eloquence, a well-stored mind, and great originality. Not only were the neighbouring weekly Bible classes emptied, but also the attendances at the neighbouring churches fell off considerably.

At this time Ireland was beginning to be interested in the high-church movement, then called Puseyism, which had created such a commotion in England. Stephen belonged to the high-church

party; and he commenced a series of sermons on "Church Doctrine." After he had preached two of these sermons, his and our old friend Dr. Greene came to him and said, calling him by his Christian name (he had attended our hero, as a child, for an attack of the mumps):

"Stephen, telling the Archbishop of Grenada his faults cost Gil Blas his secretaryship with that touchy prelate. Well, I am not your secretary, so I cannot lose that post, but I value your friendship; and I am now going, at the risk of losing it, to tell you a fault you have hid away amongst your many virtues, like a bird's nest in thick ivy. Will you listen to me at all events, my dear boy?"

"Of course I will," said Stephen, trying to be humble, "my kind friend."

"Well, then, your fault was and is delivering that course of sermons on 'Church Doctrine'; and your only remedy is at once to drop the course. We, Dublin Protestants, are only nominally Episcopalians; we are still Puritans. No matter how able, learned, and eloquent your sermons were—and I am sure they have been all that—they will only make you unpopular, and fill the Methodist chapels, and do no good."

"I take in the best part, doctor," said Stephen, with burning cheeks, writhing under these home thrusts, "what you have said; still I must deliver my message."

"But, Stephen, St. Paul did not approve of stirring up strife; and he gave up preaching at Athens when he saw it was useless."

"I do not think my course of sermons is useless," said Stephen; "on the contrary, my first two sermons have, I believe, taught the people something of the Church to which they belong."

"Well, well, my boy, you will forgive me; I have done"; and the kind, wise old man left.

Stephen next Sunday preached the third of his series, on "Apostolical Succession," in which he claimed that the Irish Episcopal Protestant Church had direct Apostolical Succession. This was followed by one on "St. Patrick," in which he argued that St. Patrick had no allegiance with Rome, and was the original founder of the then established Church of Ireland. There was a regular ferment in the parish, which spread over Dublin, and was carried by the press into the provinces. Had Stephen been a dull, unattractive preacher, he might have escaped. He was too clever and too eloquent to be safely disregarded, and indignation meetings were held to root out the dangerous weed of Puseyism which had been planted in Dublin.

One of the churchwardens of the parish was a hatter. He was an Orangeman, wealthy, and of great influence amongst his class. He summoned a meeting of the parishioners; a wine-merchant was voted into the chair. The hatter moved a resolution condemning the new doctrines which had been started in Stephen's sermons, as undermining pure Protestantism, and made a very telling speech suited to his audience. It was in vain a friend and admirer of Stephen attempted to show that Stephen's sermons were directed against Romanism, as showing that

Protestants had a direct mission from the Apostles, and that St. Patrick was practically one. This friend was not a deep theologian, and did not comprehend much of Stephen's argument ; he was a well-meaning man, and tried to make peace. He only added fuel to the flame, and a resolution of the parishioners was carried by an overwhelming majority, calling on the Rector to dispense with the services of his Curate, Lord Kingscastle, on account of his advocating dangerous Romanist doctrines.

There could only be one course for Stephen to take. He resigned his cure, intending to seek work in England.

The fact is, Episcopacy never has been popular amongst Irish Protestants. The Reformation got a chilling reception in Ireland. Gradually the bulk of the Irish peers and large landowners, including many descendants of purely Milesian or native Irish chieftains, embraced the new Protestant cult—probably, in some cases at least, to save their estates from forfeiture, and to escape being socially ostracised by their English brethren of the same rank ; but the bulk of the Irish people, either of native Irish origin or of English descent, who were in Ireland at the time of the Reformation, remained Roman Catholics.

The Scotch had been long before Henry VIII's reign settling in parts of Antrim and Down, and their descendants seem to have adopted Protestantism of the Scotch or Presbyterian type. The greater part of the rest of Ulster was planted with English and Scotch Protestant settlers in James I's reign, with the avowed object of expelling the native Irish

from their land, and abolishing the Roman Catholic religion. From this period onwards only Protestants were allowed to settle in Ireland, and they included Cromwell's soldiers, who hated Archbishop Laud worse than the Pope; Quakers, with the views of George Fox; and Baptists, with those of John Bunyan; Scotch, who fought against Episcopacy at Bothwell Bridge and Killiecrankie; and Huguenots, who fled from France after the Revocation of the Toleration Edict of Nantes.

Had William III, after his crown had been saved behind the ramparts of Derry and at the Boyne, established Presbyterianism as the State religion of Ireland, it would have expressed tolerably well the religious views, feelings, and prejudices of a large portion of the mixed Protestant population who were not already Presbyterian, and to whom Presbyterianism would have been more acceptable than Episcopacy. This, however, was not done. A compromise was, however, sensibly adopted by the clergy, who lowered the ritual below that of their English brethren, so as to make it more palatable to their Puritan congregations; and any attempt to raise that ritual to what would be considered in England a very moderate level leads in Ireland to angry discussions, and a sure leakage to Protestant dissent.

Stephen never forgot he was a gentleman, and, though he did not abandon his principles, fought with no one, and left his parish without having incurred any personal hostility.

Before leaving for England, he had a yearning to

see his native county, and he wrote to the Marchesa asking leave to spend some time at Château Dijon, and expecting as a matter of course a warm invitation. He had, indeed, serious thoughts of a surprise visit, and it would not have been the first time he had taken that liberty. To his astonishment, he got a reply from the Marchesa, regretting, on a cleverly worded, evasive excuse, that they could not have him. However, a post or two afterwards, a warm invitation came from Father O'Toole, which he gladly accepted.

Irish parish priests hear everything which happens in their parishes. They have a great moral weight, and an equally great responsibility; and it is a testimony to the fact they have faithfully done their duty that they have been left so much power for so long a period. Father O'Toole heard of Stephen's repulse by the Marchesa, and he sent his invitation accordingly.

The Bishop of Ballinasloe had explained to him the groundlessness of the accusations against Stephen, and the kind-hearted priest was determined the son of his friend, the Earl of Clara, should not be excluded from the Vale of Clara for want of hospitality.

Father O'Toole thoroughly enjoyed the visit. Stephen was a link with the past—the good old times, when the Earl kept open house at Kingscastle, and he and the Count, each in his own way, without thwarting or interfering with the other, practised the sacred rites of genial hospitality.

Stephen got an invitation to dine at Château

Dijon. He was warmly received by the Count. The Marchesa was coldly polite; Angelica, shy and nervous, but not unfriendly. Stephen had, as he thought, completely lived down the annoyance arising from the harsh interpretation put upon his kindness to Gertrude, the forlorn, half-starved, lonely actress. Dr. Greene's shelter of her, and her demeanour in his house, and her successful concerts had completely changed public opinion on the subject in Dublin. It therefore came on him as a disagreeable surprise that his old friends the Marchesa and Angelica should receive him as they did. Château Dijon was the only place in his native district where he did not get a warm reception. The clergy even, to their credit be it said, had the courage to ask him to preach; and the result was most cheering—overflowing congregations and no murmurs. Stephen wisely avoided controversial subjects, and made good use of his remarkable powers as an orator in impressing on his congregations the great truths accepted by all Christians.

He was, however, uneasy about the Dijon people; and he mentioned the matter to Father O'Toole, who had been an eye-witness to the reception he met with, forming a marked contrast to former occasions. Father O'Toole frankly told him he feared the Marchesa still believed the stories about the poor actress; and he supposed whatever Angelica heard of them was adverse to him. Stephen was not in love with Angelica; he fell in love for the first and last time with Gertrude; strange to say, he never felt how much she was to him until he parted

from her; and he now had formed a settled resolve as soon as he was able to maintain a wife to seek her out, and, if possible, win her, for he had no idea she was in love with him.

Still, he was very indignant the Marchesa should regard him with suspicion; and that the pure-minded Angelica should consider him unworthy of the regard he knew she formerly had, for him was absolutely unbearable. He did not think of seeking any explanation with the Marchesa: she had treated him with a lofty indifference which repelled all confidences; and delicate as such a subject would be between them, he determined to speak to Angelica, and plainly ask her why she had changed towards him. The Marchesa foresaw the course Stephen would probably follow, and she was resolved there should be no confidential relations between him and her daughter. Stephen called after the dinner, to find the Marchesa present, and, no Angelica. He called again and found both mother and daughter in the drawing-room. He boldly proposed a walk with Angelica in the grounds. His proposition was not enthusiastically received by her, and was completely frustrated by the Marchesa, without exactly affronting him in a manner he might have been able to notice.

He had almost given up in despair the chance of having an explanation with Angelica, when fortune favoured him. On going to make a call on an old family retainer, he met her, airing her dogs. He asked leave to turn with her, which was of course granted; how could the gentle girl be so unkind to

an old, if fallen, friend as to refuse? He at once characteristically (if he were high-church, he was certainly no casuist) plunged into the subject which he had foremost in his mind.

"Angel, why are you so distant with me, who was, and still wish to be, a brother to you? Have I lost your esteem?"

Poor Angel was taken aback. She was as honest as he was; and still she was human and averse to wounding the feelings of an old, to her more than old, friend. She coloured up, and, in faltering tones, said: "I heard stories of you which surprised and grieved me very much."

"I am glad at last," he replied earnestly, "to have the opportunity of setting myself right. Beyond help to a distressed, desolate young girl, if that is guilt, I am wholly innocent. Ask Father O'Toole, who knows all about it."

"I do not like doing so. Stephen, were you not greatly with her?"

"Only, Angel, at Dr. Greene's house."

"At Dr. Greene's house!" she said, surprised.

Stephen then explained Dr. Greene's kindness.

"Why," said she, "I knew Fanny Greene; we had music lessons together. I have lost sight of her for some time. We were friends. I have stopped at the doctor's house, and Fanny has been here."

"Then write to her, and I am satisfied with what she says of either me or the poor actress."

Angelica was half conquered already, and she and Stephen had a long walk together, almost on the old footing of friendship.

Angelica got a letter from Fanny Greene making Stephen into a hero, and ascribing to Gertrude the possession of every virtue under heaven; and she took a step which some would style forward, and others, more charitably disposed, noble: she called at Father O'Toole's, saw Stephen, and expressed her regret at ever doubting him.

Now, her mother never heard of either meeting between them, and was greatly surprised when Stephen called again at Angelica's cordial reception of him. She spoke to her about it, and Angelica explained the matter indignantly. Her mother was equally indignant; but Stephen could delay his departure no longer, and had to leave without meeting the girl again. Enough had happened, however, to seriously mar the Marchesa's plans. The feeling that Stephen was unworthy, the devotion of George, the topic sedulously impressed on her mind by her mother, that she, Angelica, and she alone, might keep the young man from destruction, and be the means, under Heaven, of bringing him to the true faith and communion with the Church, had been slowly telling. Now a revulsion had taken place, and something very like the warm feeling of love for Stephen, who had behaved nobly, and was cruelly wronged, sprung up in her young heart.

CHAPTER XIX.

ANGELICA AND THE BONEEN.

NANCY BRADLEY made a model housekeeper for Father O'Toole. She had been a lady's maid to the first Countess of Clara of our acquaintance, and afterwards went back to Kingscastle as nurse and foster-mother to George Corbet. She knew the ways of the gentry, and was educated for those days much above her position in life. She was a devout Catholic according to her lights, passionately fond of George, who took the place to her of his foster-brother who died, and who had been her only child. Her husband died whilst she was nurse to George. She was delighted to get the post with Father O'Toole. She was very fond of George, and in accepting presents from him, which she took gladly, she thought she was also serving her Church. She was soon in the regular pay of the Marchesa as a spy. Father O'Toole became, in an undefined way, uneasy about her. He found her on one or two occasions, he thought, spending an unnecessary time dusting and settling his books; and if anyone called for a certificate or a letter, she astonished Father O'Toole by knowing the exact locality of his papers far better in a few months than his former housekeeper in so many years. Father O'Toole actually caught her listening to conversations between him

and Stephen; and, indeed, it was only by an accident Nancy was prevented from giving timely warning of Angelica having called and having had an interview with Stephen before he paid his final visit at Château Dijon.

The following correspondence between the Marchesa and George Corbet will disclose the thickening of the plot between the two arch-conspirators:—

“CHÂTEAU DIJON.

“DEAR GEORGE,

“Your sanctimonious brother wrote for an invitation here, but was put off, and the next I heard of him he was stopping with Father O'Toole. As you know, Father O'Toole is silent, and, I fancy, deeper than we think. Nancy tells me she heard no talk between them which concerns us. I had to ask Stephen to dine, and, except from the Count, he did not get at first much welcome.

“Angel, I believe, thought what we all think—that the charming actress was no better than she should be—and was very cool to him. I think he felt the coolness; still I do not see any signs of his wishing to be more than an old friend to Angel, and I was hoping you were getting a warm corner in her heart, until Stephen paid his final visit here. Angel was then completely changed—quite affectionate to him. There were tears in her eyes when he left; and when she came down to dinner, she evidently had just had a fit of weeping. Nancy explained all the next day. Angel—would you believe it?—called on Stephen at Father O'Toole's, and read him a letter from old

Dr. Greene's daughter, Fanny, praising the wily actress to the skies ; and Stephen, who I am sure was entangled with the girl, is whitewashed completely. You had better not write at present to Angel or come over. Nancy has found where Father O'Toole keeps his old registers, and, of course, she can get the one the births were entered in by using his keys when he is asleep. He is failing fast. It would not do to take the book at present. She read the entry, and, as she and I remembered, Stephen was first christened, with a note that he was born before you, and had a mark on his left arm. The greater the difficulties in the way, the more determined I am. I think the Count misses you. He heard from your stepmother your father is now quite an invalid ; but his memory is still unimpaired, and there is no immediate danger of his dying. Be steady, and do not bet.

“ Affectionately yours,

“ EUGÉNIE.”

To this letter the following reply came :—

“ DEPOT, COLCHESTER.

“ DEAR MARCHESA,

“ I fear that brother of mine has undone any little way I made with Angel. Curious how she has taken hold of me. It makes me steady, however, and keeps me from races. There is heavy drinking here, but I am out of it. I was down at my father's last week. He is, as you were told, very weak and feeble. I have been consulting a London solicitor, and I

thought it better to impress upon him I thoroughly believe in my own case. He says the great thing would be if anything happened my father, to take possession before Stephen, and then Stephen would either have to give up or bring an ejectment against me. The solicitor told me allowing Stephen to be called Kingscastle was against me. This is all very well ; but if I made any row about that, my father would stand by Stephen. When I told the man this, he said I would have a very weak case if my father recognised Stephen as the elder. I know that old bachelor bishop uncle of mine could get my father to do this if my step-mother gave him the chance of talking to my father. She hates the Bishop. I sometimes think of throwing it all up. Stephen is not a hypocrite, as you think ; he is as good as I am wicked. Still, it is the only way to win Angel.

“ Ever yours,

GEORGE.”

The Marchesa dreaded the Bishop of Ballinasloe as her most dangerous antagonist in her plot to deprive Stephen of his title and inheritance. The Bishop was a shrewd man of the world—a quality which is not at all incompatible with being, as he also was, a kindly, Christian gentleman. Since Kingscastle was shut up, it had been the habit to invite him for old associations during the grouse season to Château Dijon ; and the Marchesa could not stop the Count writing to him as usual, without letting him into her secret plot, which would be

the last thing she would think of doing. She had contrived to get Angelica asked on a visit, as she did not wish the Bishop to meet her, fearing he might have his suspicions raised as to George's designs ; but, at the last moment, Angelica's friend wrote that illness had broken out in her house, and so Angelica was at home and would meet him.

Now the Bishop, though getting stouter than he wished, still was a good walker, and he had got out of the Count's carriage, which had been sent to meet him at Rathdrum, some miles up the Glenmalure road ; he wanted the exercise, and to realize quietly old scenes which were familiar to him from his earliest days.

As he walked along the road by the winding Avonbeg, where he had often fished, and saw the heathery hills, where he had often shot his full share in the old August gatherings, which had now passed away for ever, the heather seemed to the Bishop to flower more beautifully on these well-known Wicklow hills than in his new western bishopric, and the figures of his brother and poor, exiled Malet seemed to rise before him. He at length turned sharp to the right from Glenmalure, up the steep mountain road which led over the hill to the Vale of Clara ; he had not gone very far up this new way when he saw a graceful figure, belonging to the present and not to the past, walking down, evidently on purpose to meet him. A lovely girl, with a mantilla thrown over her head, came tripping along smilingly, and, waving her hand, stood in his path, "a sight to make an old man young."

The Bishop felt he could not have got a pleasanter welcome in Glenmalure, where every house looked like home. Angelica was attended by two splendid Irish setters, one red, and the other black and white, and an Irish terrier, and also, what looked intensely Irish, a pig.

"Well," said the worthy prelate to himself, as he kissed Angelica's sweet, upturned face, "if Stephen can resist this, he is no true Corbet." Then aloud to the young girl: "I can understand everything except the boneen, Angel; what does he mean?"

"The pig, my Lord," said she, laughing, "was hard to rear, and became a pet of mine. I used to feed him out of my hand, and he followed me; and now he thinks he is a dog."

"I have heard of learned pigs, Angel dear; whether this is a learned one or not, I do not know, but one thing is certain, he is a very wise one if he follows you. That black and white is a good dog; I am sure he has a good scent, and I can trace back the breed of that terrier to Kingscastle. I maintain," said the Bishop patriotically, "that an Irish setter is better than an English setter and pointer put together, and a Dandie Dinmont is nowhere with that terrier of yours."

To say the truth, the Bishop rattled on a bit as the valley and the girl and the dogs recalled old times; and not to his shame, but to his credit, be it written, he was affected, and his voice shook, though he tried to pass it off.

The Bishop and Angelica then talked of familiar subjects until they reached the Château—a long way

up the road—he thinking it not prudent on the first occasion they met to say much about his two nephews.

The Count gave his old friend a hearty welcome, and the Marchesa was civil enough, and would only be averse to the Bishop if he crossed her plans.

Father O'Toole came to dinner, and the party enjoyed themselves.

A couple of days afterwards the Bishop and Angelica, with the setters, but without the terrier and pig, started up, at the back of Château Dijon, one fine August day, to try the prospects of game for the 20th, though the Bishop had no intention of shooting.

The purple heather was in full bloom, and the air fresh and balmy ; and when the portly Bishop got a little out of breath, he appealed to his gentle companion, who was as fresh as a rose and as little distressed as if she were walking on a level seabeach, to turn and look at the glorious view, and well it repaid them. The day was clear, and free from haze. They could see right across the Valley of the Avonbeg and the moraine which closes it in on the far side from them, and beyond the valley, and towering over it, Lugnaquilla, the loftiest mountain in Wicklow, and having its topmost peak just tipped by a fleecy cloud, which added to the beauty of the scene. The Vale of Ovoca is pleasanter, and looks more a place to live in ; but Glenmalure is wilder and grander, and more like some of the Highland glens, which are full of the wonderful stories of the savage wars of former days. Glenmalure, at the time we

are writing of, contained old people who gave thrilling accounts of the stand made there by the rebel leader Holt after the rebellion of 1798, and how he defied the British armies for months in these fastnesses.

The Bishop heard George had been stopping frequently of late at Château Dijon, and that Stephen had been at Father O'Toole's; and he was curious to know the reason why the wilder, younger, and less desirable of the twins was evidently made more welcome than his steadier and elder brother. He remarked: "George has been here a good deal of late; is he expected for the 20th?"

"No," said Angelica, simply; and the Bishop said: "Stephen has been with Father O'Toole?"

"Yes," was again the sole reply.

The Bishop, so far, had not made much way, and was a little nettled; and he then, turning and looking at the girl, said gently: "Which of the two do you like better, Angel? I know they both like you, and I admire their taste."

Angelica laughed, and said: "I fear, my Lord, you are a flatterer. "They were both playmates of mine. I agree with you: I prefer Stephen; and if it had been England, I would have gone to hear him preach; but I could not, of course, according to the laws of my Church, hear him in Ireland."

"Then why," said the Bishop, "has George been stopping so much here, and Stephen not at all? and if you have scruples about entering a Protestant church, I hear George has none such as to entering yours."

Angelica blushed scarlet, and did not answer; and the Bishop replied to himself by saying, aloud: "I was taking the privilege of an old friend, dear Angel, and perhaps asking you too many troublesome questions. I am glad you prefer Stephen. I should not like you, whom I remember growing up under my old eyes, and have always dearly loved, to be too friendly with George. Your mother does not like Stephen, and nearly created a quarrel between him and me."

"Neither my mother nor George likes Stephen," replied Angelica; "I also was put against the poor fellow; and, instead of his acting wrongly, Fanny Greene writes and tells me he saved the life of a poor young, innocent girl."

"Why is this?" said the Bishop, now become more interested than he had expected; "why should they be against him? Has George, who has nothing, the impudence to run down Stephen, and ask you to marry him?"

Angelica hesitated; and it then flashed through her mind it might be right to warn Stephen's uncle of George's animosity, which this direct question had put vividly before her. She suddenly also remembered George had held out to her that, as his wife, she might become Countess of Clara, and she recalled his threats against Stephen. She then told the Bishop George had asked her to marry him, and said he was the elder son, and that he was jealous of Stephen; adding, with a nervousness which did not escape the discerning Bishop, that Stephen had never shown any feeling but friendship for her, and

George's jealousy was utterly groundless. The Bishop was puzzled, and thanked her for putting him on his guard, and they then drifted into talking of other matters.

The Marchesa eyed the two mountain-climbers, as she playfully described them, attentively at dinner; and being a conspirator herself, her guilty conscience divined that they were conspiring also. She approached the Bishop on the question of his favourite nephew, Stephen.

"Why, my Lord, is Stephen a working clergyman? is it because he has no expectations?"

"Every man, madam, ought to have a career, according to his vocation in life. Stephen, in my judgment, chose the noblest of all."

The Marchesa pursued the subject no further; she feared in trying to find out the Bishop's plans she might betray her own.

CHAPTER XX.

WHAT HAS BECOME OF FATHER O'TOOLE'S REGISTER ?

THE Bishop of Ballinasloe was much exercised in his mind by what he had heard from Angelica. She had not grasped the nefarious plot against Stephen, neither had the Bishop; but he heard enough to make him uneasy, and he called on Father O'Toole to ascertain, if possible, exactly how matters stood.

Father O'Toole, however, knew nothing more than Angelica or the Bishop. He indignantly denied that George had been received into the Catholic Church; and he hoped Angelica would not be persuaded by her mother to marry him.

"And why," said the Bishop, "does the Marchesa want the marriage?"

"I do not know," replied Father O'Toole wearily, "what plot that restless, ambitious woman has; no doubt, she thinks the so-called conversion of George may be a feather in her cap; and I cannot tell what is the meaning of George's boast to Angelica that if she married him, she would be a Countess; he, surely, does not deny Stephen is the elder. I baptized him as the elder, and entered it in my book. I got a warning to do so from a previous case which arose in this very parish as to which of two brothers was

the elder. I will show you the entry," said Father O'Toole, rising, and going to his simple muniment box.

"I wish you would; I always regarded Stephen as the elder, though it was not a matter of any importance until my nephew Michael was killed in India after that flinty-hearted sister-in-law of mine banished him there. I cannot recollect my brother ever referring to the subject; and Stephen's poor mother never mentioned it to me, she was so offended I did not come down personally to christen the boys, which you did just as well. May I ask you, Father O'Toole, who told you Stephen was the elder, when you were performing the rite of baptism?"

Father O'Toole was silent for a minute, and then said: "I cannot just now remember; the name may come to me when I recall the scene. I never heard the question debated until now. I formally asked, and was formally answered Stephen was the elder; there is no doubt about that, and I wrote it in my book, with the name of the person who told me. However, I will get the entry itself."

Father O'Toole then opened the box with a simple key, and proceeded to take out his registry books.

"Here is the oldest I have. They are all indexed."

Father O'Toole hunted amongst them; first making a joke of not laying his hands on it at once; then getting more serious; then losing his head and patience, and tumbling all the books out in a heap. The Bishop knew the year. The year was on the back of each book. After a long search the Bishop, the calmer of the two, got all the books in order, and

it was clear they were all there, except the one they wanted : it was missing !

" Have you been looking up an entry lately, Father O'Toole ?" said the Bishop ; " you may have put it aside in some other place ?"

" I tell you," said the poor priest excitedly, " I have not opened that book for years. No one disturbed it."

" Has anyone access to it ?" said the Bishop.

" No one. My new housekeeper, since I got rheumatism, occasionally takes the keys and opens the box for a book, never for one of these old books."

" And your new housekeeper is Nancy Bradley," said the Bishop ; " I know her well ; she's all right."

Nancy was called in and knew nothing about the book. She answered quite readily, and did not seem in the least taken by surprise ; in fact, she had been listening at the door, and heard all that was going on. They discussed and re-discussed the matter, and went into the Marchesa's motives, getting gradually more and more mixed, instead of clearer, over the transactions. Father O'Toole told his friend plainly he feared for a time Angelica would submit to her mother and consent to wed George ; but he had no fear on that point since she had discovered Stephen had been slandered, and George's duplicity and plots against his brother ; in fact, Father O'Toole feared Angelica was now in love with Stephen, and that he only had warm, friendly feelings for her, and nothing more.

" Would you like the match, Bishop ?" he asked.

"No, and yes," said the Bishop slowly, "I look on Stephen as my own son. I could not be fonder of him if he actually were so ; and Angelica is rightly so called, for she is an angel, heavenly, beautiful, divine, rather than human, perhaps more suited for the cloister than this work-a-day world with its petty ambitions and jealousies ; but"—here the good man smiled sadly—"until your old friend J. K. L.'s union of hearts and creeds is effected, I do not like mixed marriages."

"Neither do I," said Father O'Toole ; "but, then, Bishop, neither of us is a young man ardently in love with a young woman of a different faith. Stephen, if he loved her, which I do not think he does, might, if such were the case, find strong arguments in favour of the marriage."

"Well," said the Bishop, reflectively, and as if his mind were made up on the matter, "if Stephen told me he wanted to marry dear Angel, I would say nothing against it ; still, I would wish her a Protestant if she accepted him. As long as she does not marry a Protestant, I think her present faith becomes her well ; there could not be a better Christian, or one surer of heaven."

"Stephen will never put you to that test," said Father O'Toole. "He loves the girl as a sister ; he will never want to marry her. Angel, on the other hand, loves him, and I am glad she will never be tempted by a proposal from him—a terrible conflict would then rage in her, whether she would follow love or duty. She thinks her vocation is, as you have said, the cloister. The only solace to her would be

if Stephen became a Catholic, like so many of your ritualistic clergy. I think where two of different creeds marry, they, at all events, ought to have a union of Christendom, and have one united religion ; that is where the practical difficulty arises : which is to give way ? Jimmy Doyle, if he had lived, might have solved it, ere the world got so critical as it now is, when harmless old customs are magnified into errors, and Christian charity, though never so much applauded as nowadays, is less practised than formerly."

"To return to the subject we have at heart : we both love Angel and Stephen, and we both regret George is not what we would wish him to be. Angel's love for Stephen will never let her marry his brother, who wants to injure him. I must see my brother about this, and take care, in his old age, he blesses Esau and not Jacob."

"Now, I remember," said Father O'Toole, "it all comes back to me. I warned them at the christening not to put Ephraim before Manasseh, and good Mrs. Simpson, who held Stephen, said : 'No fear of that : this is the elder ; this is Manasseh, and he is the finer boy of the two ; and Nancy Bradley was there holding George. By the way, she was talking to me of it the other day. I think she was trying to find out what I remembered. She evidently favours George, though she tries to conceal it.'"

Father O'Toole, notwithstanding the stiffening of his joints, got up quietly and opened the door suddenly, and both the men saw Nancy moving away, and Father O'Toole cried after her : "Bring

us coffee, Mrs. Bradley," and, shutting the door, whispered: "She was manifestly listening."

"Certainly," said the Bishop, "there is no doubt of that. I thought she would have been all right. By the way, who recommended her?"

"The Marchesa."

"Then I advise you to get rid of her; we must counteract some plot which is evidently hatching."

These two good old men were bad detectives. Both had plenty of common-sense, but the honesty of their natures found it almost impossible for them to realize the nefarious wickedness of the scheme which was slowly unfolding. A crime, unless committed by a lunatic, has some motive; the motive, even when the perpetrator is quite sane, is often so remote, so unsubstantial, that it actually renders it the more difficult to discover. Here a young man, in a vain attempt to win the girl whom he loved, for his main object, and a peerage and estates as additional secondary temptations, is willing to blast the reputation and ruin the career of a twin-brother who always aided him and helped him out of many a scrape. Still, there were here ordinary human motives—love, jealousy, pride of rank, and greed of gain.

The Marchesa was harder to understand, and it might have puzzled her to fix on her leading motive for her intended crimes, of which she was the relentless instigator and originator, as she led and tempted George to join her in them. She had passionately loved her son. She was willing to sacrifice husband, daughter, herself, and everyone for his advancement;

he was taken from her, and she became ambitious for her daughter, of whose beauty, accomplishments, and attractiveness she was justly proud. Had she carried her to England or the Continent—had Angelica been willing to obey her, without any plot or intrigue—the Marchesa might have easily secured a brilliant alliance for her now only child.

The Count was averse to leaving the Château Dijon, and the Marchesa had got out of touch with the world: she, therefore, was almost restricted to the twins. She unhesitatingly chose Stephen as the elder, the better conducted, and the one she saw Angelica favoured; she slowly perceived to her astonishment and indignation that he evidently did not fancy Angelica. In her rage against the man whom she considered had rejected the hand of her daughter, she turned to his brother; and in making George a fit suitor for Angelica it became necessary to overthrow the brother, whom she was only too anxious to punish for his insolent indifference, and for thwarting her schemes. Slight and visionary as such motives appear to be for such dastardly crimes, they are stronger than many which have convulsed the world. Father O'Toole and the Bishop could not fathom them; but they were slowly and reluctantly learning that, whatever the motives might be, a conspiracy was in existence which they were bound for every reason to defeat as best they could. They sat long over their coffee, and then strolled slowly to Château Dijon, and met Nancy Bradley just leaving the place as they entered. She looked annoyed at meeting them, and the two friends

exchanged meaning looks as she passed by them. It was easy to see she had been carrying news to the Marchesa.

The Bishop would have left at once, only he did not wish to offend the Count, whom he acquitted of having any connection with the plot, and he did not wish to arouse the Marchesa's suspicions.

As he and the Count were sitting over their wine after dinner a couple of days later, the Count, remaining silent for a few moments, then asked the Bishop what he thought of his nephew George, adding: "The Marchesa, I fancy, though she has not confided in me, evidently wants to marry him to my Angel. We are old friends, Fitzroy; I do not like the man. If it were either of your nephews, I would prefer Stephen; still, she could not marry a Protestant parson, and it struck me he was not anxious to win her. George is evidently devoted to Angel. I fear, though, he bets and gambles and drinks too much. You are not offended with me, Fitz, old fellow? Angel is all that is left to me, and you yourself have seen her grow up; you would not like to see her unhappy or marry a scamp, which George, I am afraid, is?"

"Count," said the Bishop, solemnly, "I love Angel; I would give her to my favourite nephew, my adopted son, if both of them had their hearts set on it; on account of the difference in religions and his profession, I agree with you, the match would be unsuitable. As to George, I would sooner follow Angel's coffin to the grave than see her married to such a blackguard."

"Then, Fitz, you think badly of him?"

"Could not think worse," was the reply.

"I do not think Angel will marry him. My wife never could influence her in important things; and if I find it necessary, I will interfere. I hear nothing of his coming over. It may be a needless fear; still, I am glad I had a talk with you. Have another glass of claret."

And they had another glass together, and joined the ladies, and Angelica sang sweetly a Spanish ballad for them to her mother's accompaniment.

The Bishop left the next day.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE THEATRE ELEVATES AS WELL AS DEPRAVES.

AUGUSTA, Lady Stonehenge, lived in Grosvenor Square. She was an elderly, stately, kindly, clever, rich old woman, and the Dowager of the twelfth Lord Stonehenge, and she looked down on the new mushroom additions to the House of Lords. She at one time was likely to become an important social political leader, with an influential salon. The death of her husband, who was a Cabinet Minister, put an end to all such aspirations. She had no son; and the peerage went off to a distant cousin of her husband. She had four daughters, all of whom had flown away from her nest, and were well married. The last of them had only left her a couple of months, and Lady Stonehenge felt very lonely. She poured out her feelings on this subject to her old friend, Lady Mildred Northallerton, who was herself a widow, and was at the time at which we are now writing on a visit to her niece, the Lady Lieutenant in Dublin. Lady Mildred replied, stating an accomplished young person, a Miss Gertrude Banks, who was then in Dublin, might answer as a companion; that she had heard a good deal of her from a Mrs. Greene, the wife of a leading

physician, professionally engaged at the Castle. Lady Stonehenge wrote back to Lady Mildred begging her to make further inquiries, and got the following letter :—

“VICEREGAL LODGE, DUBLIN.

“DEAR GUSSY,

“The season is over at last. It wound up by a Ball on St. Patrick’s Day. You know I do not like the Irish. I think them quarrelsome and troublesome; still, there are very pretty girls amongst them, with awful brogues, and fine-looking young men, who dance awkwardly. I know I am the most good-natured old woman in the world; still, I pity you since you lost Mabel. I saw Mrs. Greene. She says Gertrude Banks is a daughter of Captain Banks, who a long time ago was in the 30th Hussars. I just remember meeting him. He went to the bad and lived on his sister, and the sister reared Gertrude; and when she died, the girl went on the stage, and fell ill in Dublin, and was taken up by Dr. Greene and has been living with them for some time. Mrs. Greene has her with her own daughters, and praises her highly. The Bankses you must have heard of. They have a fine old family seat in Worcester, called Millbrook Chase. I got an invitation for Mrs. Greene and the girl to a private luncheon at the Viceregal Lodge, and she fairly surprised me. She has not a bit of an under-bred actress’s manner; she is quiet, refined, and aristocratic in looks and every way; can speak several languages fluently, and sing and play splendidly.

I spoke to her about you, and she is satisfied to go to you on trial. I sent you all my news in my last.

“ Ever yours,

“ MILDRED NORTHALLERTON.”

Lady Stonehenge had great confidence in the knowledge of the world and penetration of her friend, and got Gertrude over on trial, and took a great fancy to her. Lady Stonehenge believed in blue blood, and the girl being a Banks, of Millbrook Chase, satisfied her on that point. Gertrude had been brought up in refinement by Miss Banks, and showed her patroness that she was quite able to pour out tea and coffee, and play and sing, and act the assistant hostess at Lady Stonehenge's receptions and more private little gatherings. The girl had all the instincts of a lady; and her year on the stage had done her good, not harm. Many well-meaning people uncharitably and ignorantly brand all actors and actresses as dangerous, dissolute characters. If they inquired, they would learn that they include as well-born, highly-bred, honourable men and women as there are to be found in the world. There is certainly as great a difference between a high-class, well-living young actress and her degraded sister as there is between a play of Shakspeare and a play of Mrs. Afra Behn. Gertrude's ambition when she joined the stage had been to fit herself for the leading characters in Shakspeare and other first-rate plays; and the study of them, and the interest she had taken in what she regarded as her profession,

enlarged and strengthened her naturally good intellect, and in no way injured her instinctive purity of thought. She also prided herself upon her family, was determined in no way to lower it, and she felt it due to the memory of her aunt, whom she regarded as a mother, to maintain the bearing of a lady, though a struggling actress. She naturally was stunned at first when she heard of her forlorn condition on Miss Banks's death! still, she felt no resentment, as she knew the old lady had intended to leave her well provided for. Miss Banks had, by her will, left certain trust moneys to Gertrude; but it was found after her death she had no power to do so, her interest in them having ceased with her life.

Lady Stonehenge at first, when she went out herself to receptions and drives, left Gertrude at home. Gradually and imperceptibly Gertrude got beyond being merely a humble companion, assisting in doing the honours in Grosvenor Square. Visitors were attracted by her; and Lady Stonehenge was surprised by several of the most exclusive of them actually including Miss Gertrude Banks in their invitations to receptions and, afterwards, even to dinners.

Gertrude had been paid large sums for singing in London at some very select concerts; and, besides, Lady Stonehenge insisted on giving her dresses for the private entertainments she was now asked to accompany her to.

Every really good-hearted lady is a born matchmaker; and Lady Stonehenge observed with amusement and delight that, in a marked manner,

the number of young men surprisingly increased at her own afternoons and private receptions. To her amazement Gertrude did not seem as glad to talk to them as they to her; and there was an undercurrent of sadness in her she could not account for altogether by the unexpected reverse of fortune she met with in her aunt's, Miss Banks's, death.

One of the young men who seemed most attracted by Gertrude was the young Earl of Church Stretton, the eldest son of the Marquis of Wrekin. Lord Church Stretton was in the Coldstream Guards. A handsome young man of average abilities, and the reputation of being fairly steady for a young nobleman about town. The peerage had been a poor one until Lord Church Stretton's father, the existing Marquis, married a rich manufacturer's daughter; and, as there was a large family, it was considered desirable the heir to this ancient title should also marry money. His attentions to Gertrude became, however, very marked. Lady Stonehenge watched her narrowly, and observed, without any decided action on Gertrude's part, she managed to keep him at a distance, and avoid *tête-à-tête*, and in a surprisingly clever way to contrive that some other youth should turn over her music for her, or pay her many of the little courtesies winning, attractive young girls usually receive.

Lady Stonehenge was fairly at a loss how to account for her companion's indifference to the prospect of a good settlement; and, as was her wont, she poured out her thoughts in a letter to Lady Mildred, who had returned to her dower house in Yorkshire.

"GROSVENOR SQUARE.

"DEAREST MILLY,

"Come up for a few days and see what is going on. The Austrian Prince is here; has come to my reception, and talks French and German alternately to my factotum, Gertrude. Dearest Milly, I cannot make her out. She is either the deepest hypocrite or the best creature I have ever met. Young Church Stretton haunts my house. It is easy to see Gertrude is the attraction. In the most marvellous way, without offending him or doing anything marked, she keeps him at a distance. At first I thought she was doing the actress—wanting to lure him on, entangle him inextricably in her meshes, and prevent his family taking the alarm. I cannot now think it. Only imagine, my usual invitation to dinner at the Wrekins was accompanied by an invitation to Miss Gertrude Banks. Now, Church Stretton can do anything he likes with the Marchioness, his mother. You remember her, Milly, the year she was presented, an amiable, plain little thing. He has, of course, managed this invitation. Gertrude wanted not to go. 'Why?' I said. 'Because,' said she, 'it is taking me out of my position.' I said: 'The Bankses of Millbrook Chase were a fine old family, and anyone can see you have breeding.' 'I sometimes doubt if I am of that family, Lady Stonehenge,' she answered, in a trembling voice, as if she could scarcely keep from crying. 'Why, what do you mean?' I said; and she then replied: 'The last talk I had with poor old Captain Banks, whom I always regarded as my father, I

gathered from him I may have been no relation to him at all. He was very confused, and muttered something about my being adopted ; and gave me a box with old faded letters and some trinkets, which I have never had time to go through. In fact, kind friend, I feel like on the brink of some terrible precipice ; I do not want to know who I am.' I did not like to say anything to Gertrude then about Church Stretton ; but if Emily Wrekin chooses to ask the girl to dinner, I cannot be blamed if her son marries her. I just said, by way of ending the conversation, but gently, to the poor child (why is it I am so fond of her, Milly ? Am I getting dotty ?) : ' I would like you to go this time, Gertrude ; we will talk about your own affairs some other time ; they may prove better than you think.' She agreed, and we went. The Austrian Prince and Church Stretton contended for her. I never saw her look so handsome. I gave her a white muslin evening dress. She wore my pearl necklace, a gold watch and chain she had of her mother's, and a brooch with a likeness of her mother in it, and some of her hair. She is a mystery to me. I often fancy she was fond of some one before we met. She not only does not flirt, but even is apparently quite indifferent to admiration. The Marquis introduced himself to her, and they had a long chat ; and only think, Milly, he saw us out to our carriage. I have often dined in the house, but I was never paid such an attention before.

" Your loving friend,

" AUGUSTA STONEHENGE."

After a few days came a long letter from Lady Mildred, from which it is only necessary to give the following extract :—

“ I agree with you, Gussy ; you *are* getting ‘ dotty ’ ; take care that mysterious young woman does not forge your name and steal your jewels ; your necklace I consider you have virtually given her in your dotage. No, thank you, I could not bear the journey to London just now, I would have too much carriage travelling. I am invited to Wrekin Castle ; perhaps I may meet you there and your protégée, on the lookout no doubt for a catch, if she is not married already. I feel I am responsible for recommending her to you ; if we meet at Wrekin, I will watch her, and take notes.”

Lady Stonehenge questioned Gertrude about what the Marquis was saying to her. Gertrude simply said : “ He asked me could I possibly be related to him, as I was very like his mother, and I told him I thought not. He also told me he wished Lord Church Stretton to marry and settle down in one of his country seats.”

“ That means,” said Lady Stonehenge, “ that you will see no more of the Wrekins.”

“ On the contrary,” said Gertrude ; “ he said that you, dear Lady Stonehenge, were asked to Wrekin in the autumn, and that I should accompany you.”

“ That’s the most wonderful thing of all,” said the old lady ; “ wonders never cease.”

We must here explain that Gertrude when settled at Lady Stonehenge’s found out with great difficulty, through the manager of the theatrical company,

what had become of Captain Banks, whom she never doubted to be her father. She heard he had been dismissed for drunkenness, and traced him to a wretched room, where he was found by her, starving and in rags. She placed him in comfortable lodgings and looked after him tenderly, and had not to do it for very long ; and before his death he made the startling revelations to her of her own parentage, which she forced herself, as she thought she was bound to do, to relate to Lady Stonehenge.

CHAPTER XXII.

ALL ROUND THE WREKIN.

THE Marquis of Wrekin was brother to Lady Violet Malet. He was richer than his father, who was the previous holder of the title. The present Marquis had married the only daughter and child of a wealthy manufacturer. The Marchioness was highly educated and accomplished; and, as we have seen from Lady Stonehenge's rather spiteful allusion to her in her letter to Lady Mildred Northallerton, had been duly hall-marked by presentation at Court. Lady Stonehenge and others of her contemporaries were in fact jealous of her popularity and cleverness, as well as her money. She, however, carried off a great prize in the matrimonial market in securing a worthy nobleman, the possessor of an ancient title, which only required wealth to support its dignity.

The English nobility has surpassed all the corresponding classes in other countries by their marvellous power of assimilation. They were never a noblesse apart from the rest of the community; the eldest son and heir-apparent is a commoner until he succeeds to the title, and often sits in the House of Commons. Though he sometimes takes by courtesy one of his father's minor titles, he is still one of the people, and in touch with them. Marriage with the rising commercial families infuses new blood

and new ideas into the nobility; and marriage latterly with Colonial and American girls has done far more good in bringing Greater Britain and Greater Ireland into friendly relations with the old country than any amount of treaties and trade regulations.

The Marquis and Marchioness of Wrekin, in addition to Lord Church Stretton, had several sons and daughters, and the young Ladies Manning helped their mother in doing the honours of Wrekin Castle, the seat of the family.

The castle was a venerable pile, with formerly a moat around it, which had been long since filled up. It stood on high ground, and the fields and parks lying below it were almost surrounded by a river, and its demesne contained oaks of great antiquity. The present Marquis had revived the traditional hospitalities of the place, and especially the annual festival of the Harvest Home in September, when the famous, time-honoured toast was proposed by the Marquis, or the heir to the title for him, in the large banqueting-hall in which many sovereigns had been entertained, of "All round the Wrekin," the popular toast of Shropshire—the Wrekin Hill being central, and standing conspicuously by itself in that lovely county.

Lady Stonehenge and her companion got invitations for the September festivities. Lady Mildred Northallerton had also been invited; but, greatly to her regret, she could not go, owing to an attack of gout, and had instead to drive to the Granby Hotel at Harrogate, and go through a course of the all-healing waters of that pleasant health resort. Secretly, Lady

Stonehenge was glad of her absence. As an old friend, Lady Mildred took the liberty of telling Gertrude's kind-hearted patroness her mind. As she said, she was always frank, and being frank with Lady Mildred meant saying disagreeable things, what she called "home truths."

Gertrude had profited by her many vicissitudes of fortune, and was not over-elated by her triumphs or the great compliment paid to her in being invited to Wrekin as a guest, and not merely as a dependent of Lady Stonehenge. In fact, she doubted if it were prudent for her to go, Lord Church Stretton's attentions to her being embarrassing; and as he was not a flirt or lady-killer, they could have only one meaning, which was apparently, judging from her invitation, acquiesced in by his parents. She respected him; she felt, however, she did not and never could love him; and she knew it could not be to his advantage to marry her; and though his people might not like to oppose his choice, Gertrude considered they could not but think he might do better, socially and financially.

It may appear attributing to Gertrude Banks a feeling for others beyond human nature, in stating she resolved in her own mind to refuse him, though she knew him to be a desirable match, because she would not inflict on a man who loved her a wife who could not return his love, and was not his equal in birth or fortune. There are no doubt too many young women who only think of their own little lives, and do not spare a thought for others, even those who are devoted to them; but, thank God,

such are in a decided minority; women are far less selfish than men; and more women are ready to sacrifice themselves for men than men are to give up even their small whims and pleasures for women. The great Wizard of the North, who knew human nature well, wrote the beautiful well-known lines—

“ O woman ! in our hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
And variable as the shade
By the light quivering aspen made ;
When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou ! ”

He also sketched in humble prose the character of Jeanie Deans, who told the Duke of Argyle she could not marry the man whom she loved, and who loved her, simply saying : “ But I maun think for him as weel as for mysell. He is a clergyman, sir ; and it would not beseem him to marry the likes of me, wi’ this disgrace on my kindred.”

Now Gertrude Banks had not the temptation of giving up the man she loved, though we hope she would have been equal to that sacrifice. The revelation she got on Captain Banks’s death-bed was a terrible shock. She found herself not only not his daughter, but a nameless, penniless wanderer—her very beauty and her attractions a trouble to her. She never had the courage to open the bundle of papers the maundering, muddle-headed old drunkard gave her ; a hasty glance showed her they consisted principally of old letters, on old-fashioned paper, and written in unfamiliar handwriting. Pure as she was, she had seen enough of the world to know the

probability must be she had no right to claim an honest descent from any parents; and she shrank from rendering certain what she feared. She felt now without the sustaining help of the conscious pride of believing she came of a good lineage. She was again repeating the life she had led with Miss Banks, her fancied aunt, a life of luxury and adulation, with the prospect of at any time being thrown on the world with nothing but her musical talents to depend on. Lady Stonehenge was always holding up before her the dazzling prospect of a brilliant match. She shrank from this; she did not admit to herself in her most secret heart-communings she had ever loved Lord Kingscastle, and she certainly did not know it. She felt, however, there was a romance connected with her thoroughly unconventional introduction to him, and with his chivalrous conduct towards her, forming a pleasing contrast to the commonplace acquaintances of Lady Stonehenge's drawing-room. She knew Lord Church Stretton admired her, and was a very probable suitor; still nothing would induce her to marry him. It might be enough that she did not and could not ever love him; but there was more than that to render a marriage with him impossible. Gertrude was romantic. How could anyone have played Imogen in *Cymbeline*, and Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*, as she had done, without being so? young as she then was, she had been selected for these parts. The study of the masterpieces of the stage, and the noble thoughts running through them, had elevated a naturally pure, unselfish character, and taught her a

feeling for others and a higher sense of self-respect than are brought out in ordinary life. She could not endure the idea of allowing Lord Church Stretton to injure himself by marrying her. She further knew well from the bitter experiences she had of the world that, try how she might to please his every whim, he would become disillusioned, and awake to the terrible consciousness he had thrown himself away. Her feelings for Lord Kingscastle were quite different. She did not know he ever loved her. It never entered into her mind there was a possibility of her ever becoming his wife. She thought there was a great improbability of their ever even meeting again, and still she had unconsciously a more tender feeling, a warmer corner in her heart for him than for any one else. She cherished as one of her most precious little possessions—and she had, poor thing, very few—a rose which he gave her for her dress at her concert in Dublin: it was but a withered flower; still, it had been his gift. He was her knight-errant, and had suffered in her cause. Gertrude had, in her last letter from the manager of the theatrical company, too clearly seen the light in which her friendship with Lord Kingscastle was regarded by the world. The letter was intended to be very straight and matter-of-fact, like many so-called business letters; it was very brutal and very untrue, and it wounded her sensitive feelings sorely, and increased the intensity of her admiration for the knight who had suffered on behalf of her, the defenceless maiden.

To Lady Stonehenge's gratification, and to Gertrude's annoyance, they were met at the railway

station by Lord Church Stretton himself, driving a wagonette. There were a couple of other visitors in the train, which, to Gertrude's relief, took from anything very remarkable in Lord Church Stretton's conduct. Still, his admiration for her was not concealed.

Lady Stonehenge was one of those determined, thorough Englishwomen who do nothing by halves, and she insisted, out of her own pocket, in having her young protégée dressed as a young lady of rank. The better dressed the girl was, the more distinguished she looked; and it never occurred to any of the other visitors or the retainers she would not be in every way a suitable match for the heir to an ancient Marquisate.

Lady Stonehenge had announced, when Gertrude first came to her, what both she and Gertrude believed, that she was a niece of Miss Banks and daughter of the well-born, if ne'er-do-weel, Captain Banks, still remembered by old people as a dashing cavalry officer.

House parties of half-a-century ago were not worked on the same lines as at present. People did not then live with their ears to a telephone wire when they were not scribbling a telegram; motor-cars did not then run down innumerable old women, children, and dogs, and cover all who escape with their lives with mud or dust.

Wrekin Castle was ten miles then from a railway station, and was old-fashioned even for fifty years ago. Lady Stonehenge and Gertrude arrived to a very substantial dinner, at what would now be a

ridiculously early hour. The gentlemen sat longer over the walnuts and the wine. No one eats walnuts now—they do not suit the modern teeth or digestion ; and they drink less wine—that is, *after* dinner. Lord Church Stretton soon joined the ladies, and Gertrude treated the party to her wondrous voice. Besides less common songs she sang “The Bridge of Fancies” (who ever hears it now?) and “Kathleen Mavourneen.” Though an English girl, she had got special lessons from an Irish teacher in the modulation and intonation required for an Irish song ; and to an English audience with a not too critical ear for Irish cadence, she seemed to have a perfectly Irish accent. She was, in appearance at all events, of the thoroughly English type ; and the Irish are not so narrow-minded as to think all the perfections of the human race are confined to this “tight little island of ours,” to the exclusion of the rest of the world, more especially of our pushing, prosperous English cousins. She was a fine, tall, healthy, good-humoured girl, with deep blue eyes and the wondrous Saxon yellow hair without a suspicion of red in it. She had a wealth of hair—more almost than she could manage. She had also the strong, sensible look many English girls, even at their gayest moments, never lose. She was dressed simply, though richly, and was by far the most attractive, aristocratic-looking girl at the Castle, besides being the best educated, and, above all, the best singer ; and so thought the Marquis of Wrekin, who evidently was passionately devoted to music. Lord Church Stretton himself left the entertaining of

Gertrude to his father. The Marquis was a courtly nobleman of the old school. As a very young Guardsman, he had fought under Wellington. He conversed with Gertrude on general topics ; to her surprise and that of others, he paid her more attention than was usually expected from the head of the house to so young a girl, and Gertrude found him gazing intently at her with an inquiring look when he thought her attention was diverted elsewhere. He appeared once or twice about to say something which was on his mind, and thought better of it ; he asked her to play the piano and sing more songs, and stopped all conversation when she was either playing or singing.

The great harvest festival took place the next day. All the people from the highest to the lowest were asked, and there were no refusals, except from people who could not possibly come. The day was gloriously fine. The entertainment was timed so as to allow two good hours' daylight for it. The tables being laid in the large old oak-panelled banqueting-hall, with overflow tables on the greensward for the younger folk, the arrangements were according to ancient custom—the Marquis presiding indoors, and Lord Church Stretton outside. Lady Stonehenge was in the house. Gertrude was separated from her and put at a table in a large tent with Lord Church Stretton and the younger people. He did not then pay her any conspicuous attention, and she was taken care of by a young scion of a leading family of the neighbourhood. Dancing engagement cards were distributed during the feast ; the gentleman

who sat next her got first place, and Lord Church Stretton secured an early and late dance, and her programme was soon filled up. The polka was at this period just coming in, and was the favourite dance of the evening. Gertrude was passionately fond of dancing, and entered into the spirit of the ball. Lord Church Stretton claimed his dance, and after it was over brought his partner to have some light refreshment in one of the large reception-rooms of the old Castle. He tried to lead Gertrude on to the subject which was uppermost in his mind, but she adroitly avoided it; at length he said quite abruptly: "Miss Banks, I am going to leave the army and settle in the country; will you share your lot with me?"

The proposal was certainly matter-of-fact enough; the poor fellow had to make an opportunity and did it awkwardly; he then added: "You would make me very happy. I would try to make you happy."

The girl replied quietly: "Lord Church Stretton, I cannot marry you. I feel deeply the compliment you have paid me, but it is impossible."

"Why?" said the young man eagerly; "I love you; cannot you love me only just a little? and by my devotion to you you will, by degrees, come to love me more."

"It cannot be, my Lord; do not press the question further; it distresses me to have to answer you."

"Do you love another then?" he asked rather hotly.

"No," said poor Gertrude, quite truthfully as she thought; "still, I can never marry you. You do

not know my history, ask me no more ; let us return to the ball-room."

Lord Church Stretton led her back, and did not claim his second dance. She was glad to see he bore up manfully, and danced with all grades, as the heir by ancient custom was bound to do at this annual gathering.

The ball was followed by various picnics and social gatherings ; but Lord Church Stretton, though he treated Gertrude with kindly courtesy, did not again advance his suit.

One morning the old Marquis found Gertrude in the writing-room, and, looking at her attentively, as she had frequently remarked him do, asked her to accompany him to the picture-gallery, and, placing her before a lovely Reynolds portrait, told her, "That was my mother, and a striking likeness. She was just your age, I imagine, when it was taken, and, allowing for difference of dress, might it not stand for your portrait? There must be some family connection."

Gertrude replied with emotion : "My Lord, there can be none ; it is only a strange accident."

"I am not so sure of that," he said ; "I think the Bankses are connected with us, and family resemblances are curious ; they turn up after long intervals."

"My Lord, it is right to tell you my name is not Banks. I only learned this quite lately from Captain Banks, whose daughter I thought I was ; I am no fitting guest for your house. I have been treated with more than kindness and consideration,

and the only return I can make you is to leave and regret I ever came. I am a nameless girl, adopted and educated by Miss Banks out of pity. It was hard, though, to bring me up to believe I was of a social standing I have no claim to."

"Who, in the name of Heaven, then, are you? You remind me now of a favourite sister; your pleading voice, your singing recalled old times. You have her voice; you have my mother's face and figure."

"All mere accident," was the sad answer. "My Lord, I entreat you to spare me; if I have deceived you, it was, I assure you, unintentional, and now you know all."

"My child," said the kind old English nobleman, who when he is good is very good, "I am certain you have as pure blood in your veins as anyone in this house. Was it because you do not know who your parents were you refused my son?"

Gertrude looked at him with her honest eyes brimming with tears.

"That was sufficient, my Lord, in itself; but I did not love your son enough to marry him."

"I will question you no more, dear, on that point. Surely, however, you will let an old man be a friend to you if he can; and, unless I am prying into something I ought not, may I ask you have you any papers which relate to your family?"

"Yes, my Lord, I have, but not here," she said.

"Well then, as soon as we return to London bring them to me. Will you not trust me? There is that look again appealing to me, like a voice from the

grave. It is strange, passing strange; it is more than an accident, though you account for it as such. Mind, I will be hurt if you leave; remain for your full visit. I like you for your own sake, and also for the memory of one who was treated harshly."

"My Lord," said Gertrude, weeping silently, "I do not refuse your help so generously offered; I fear, however, there is little to be discovered."

"We will see, we will see," said the old man, affecting a gaiety he did not feel; "be not so sure of that."

CHAPTER XXIII.

“HOW CHARMING IS DIVINE PHILOSOPHY!”

LORD KINGSCASTLE had changed, if not actually in his theological doctrines, certainly greatly in his sermons and pastoral ministrations, since he had to leave Dublin, owing to his inopportune sermon on “Apostolical Succession.” He was completely misunderstood by his Dublin Puritan congregation. They thought he was promulgating Papistical doctrines. On the contrary, he was endeavouring to prove that the Protestant Episcopal Church of Ireland had unbroken episcopal succession down from the Apostles through St. Patrick, and that St. Patrick himself was a Protestant Catholic and not a Roman Catholic. The Irish are at the same time the most religious and the most litigious nation in the world. Every infant is labelled some religion; and, however neglected, untaught, unwashed, and unkempt a child may be, woe betide anyone of an opposing faith who meddles with it. It is the same way with the bogs. A bog may happen to be a “no man’s land,” until some benevolent individual or public body wishes to utilize it for the general good; then the whole country is up in arms to defend to the death what previously appeared “a derelict.”

When Lord Kingscastle moved to a mining parish

in England, on his uncle Lord Dartmoor's estate, he, being not only a zealous churchman, but a shrewd young man open to convictions, saw his work was to make his flock Christians and God-fearing people, without troubling them with the controversies of the various parties. To his horror he found in Christian England, with its largely endowed, established Christian Church, multitudes of men and women and children who had never heard the most elementary truths of the Christian faith. He was an eloquent, learned man; and began preaching sermons without any controversial tenets on the admitted doctrines of all professing Christians.

There have at all times been ministers of Christ's Gospel in Ireland who have had the courage to do the same: still, they are not appreciated; they are suspected as being lukewarm trimmers or opportunists.

Lord Kingscastle's sermons to the ignorant mining people, who, at that period, burrowed under ground, and only occasionally came to the surface, were like the famous sermon by a preaching missionary of the Roman Catholic Church, with which a wise old countrywoman taunted her Protestant mistress, who was favouring controversialists in the districts.

"Ma'am," said she, "the sermon I heard to-day from Father Brady is not like the one you wish me to go hear, which abuses my religion and praises yours. Father Brady gave us a grand discourse, and there was not one word of religion in it from the beginning to the end."

Her mistress laughed at her, but the old woman used "religion" in the old correct sense of the word as meaning ceremonies and formularies as distinguished from fundamental and important doctrines, about which comparatively unimportant questions—unimportant as compared to the simple essential truths of Christianity—a fierce fight was then raging over Ireland. Father Brady had simply preached broad Christianity and charity as they are to be found in Christ's Sermon on the Mount, and St. John's Gospel, without in the slightest degree compromising or minimising the distinctive doctrines, ceremonies, or formularies of his Church.

Lord Kingscastle met with the most encouraging success. At first he preached within doors in the large old parish church, and when that became too small to contain the multitudes, he held open-air meetings, and he went about, like St. Paul at Rome, "preaching the Kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him," and without incurring any hostility from other sects. He simply had, as it were, unearthed persons who had been forgotten and utterly neglected. This absorbing occupation improved his mind; the awful importance of his mission raised him above narrow disputes, and he became engrossed in his sacred labour.

The Wrekin party were invited to a county ball in a not very distant county town, which was also a cathedral city; and a large contingent of them went, including Gertrude, and remained a couple

of days in the place, and visited the magnificent cathedral on Sunday. They attended the service chiefly to hear the beautiful music, without knowing or caring who was the preacher; and Gertrude could scarcely conceal her feelings and excitement when Lord Kingscastle ascended the pulpit to fulfil an engagement in the nature of a command from his Bishop.

The Irish have a natural gift of public speaking, whether in the pulpit, at the bar, or in the senate. Lord Kingscastle was an Irish orator. He had that indescribable face and manner which can be and often are depicted on canvas, but cannot be explained in words, and still was apparent before he opened his lips. He was, in fact, an Irishman, the way another man might be a Scotchman, an Englishman, or a Welshman. He was one of the Irish type which was evolved out of so many mixed races, and amidst so many opposing religious and political forces. Once in the pulpit his speech bewrayed him, not only by his accent, which fortunately Eton had not destroyed, but by his far-reaching voice, which, without any effort on his part, filled the spacious building.

He took for his sermon two texts, the one from Hebrews: "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come"; and the other from St. John's Gospel, consisting of the comforting words, "In my Father's house are many mansions." He preached a truly catholic sermon, in the widest sense of that remarkable word, which is too often claimed by each Christian sect as peculiarly its exclusive

property. The sermon might be described as an illustration of the truth of those noble words :

“ How charming is divine Philosophy !
Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose ;
But musical as is Apollo's lute,
And a perpetual feast of nectar'd sweets,
Where no crude surfeit reigns.”

Gertrude was enthralled by his eloquence, and his earnest, startling utterances were completely in accord with her own thoughts and feelings. The lonely girl, keenly sensitive to her origin, and longing for sympathy and advice, fancied he had recognised her and was preaching at her, and she hid her face to hide her confusion. When the service was over, she felt sure he would at once seek her out, and it must be admitted—the girl was human—she lingered as long as she could in the cathedral and its precincts, expecting him. She felt bitterly disappointed when he did not come to her, as he undoubtedly would have done had he perceived her amongst that vast concourse of people. He certainly had not seen her, and this became pleasingly evident to Gertrude by the delighted surprise he showed when he did meet her, later in the day, in the cathedral close, at the Dean's residence. Notwithstanding that she was prepared to meet him, she was nervous at their first interview. She had been overwrought by the necessity of having to give the pain and mortification of a refusal to Lord Church Stretton, whom she respected and liked, and she was more overcome by the generosity of the

Marquis, who had evidently been confided in by his son. Lord Kingscastle asked Gertrude if she had been ill, and reproached her for not letting him know how near she had been to his residence, that he might have gone to see her.

Stephen accepted an invitation from Lord Church Stretton to visit Wrekin Castle, and was promptly secured by the vicar of the parish in a day or two afterwards to preach.

Lady Stonehenge was not one of the party to the cathedral city; still, she heard of Lord Kingscastle and the friendship between him and her protégée; and she drew correct conclusions from a conversation she had with Gertrude as to her feelings for him, and she began to understand her aloofness from other desirable young candidates for her hand.

Lady Stonehenge early sought an opportunity of making Stephen's acquaintance when he came to the castle, and watched him and Gertrude together. She observed he sought Gertrude, and that Gertrude avoided him. He remarked to Lady Stonehenge that the girl seemed changed.

"She has been troubled, Lord Kingscastle, with what many other young women lack—too many suitors," the astute old lady answered.

"I remark," said he, "Lord Church Stretton admires her; and, some way, I think, she does not favour him."

"She does not favour anyone," she replied, "as far as I can see. Perhaps she lost her heart in Ireland."

The young man coloured, and replied gravely:

"How that was I cannot say. I know she made fast friends there."

He asked Gertrude to take a walk in the grounds with him, and said: "Miss Banks, I fear something is troubling you, and you seem as if you wanted to avoid me. Can I help you in any way? You must know you have only to ask me."

"I have many kind friends," she replied, "and you are the oldest of them. I would not be alive now except for you. My trouble consists in trying to think how I am to earn a living. I cannot live as I do any longer."

"Why?" he asked.

"I am in a false position," she answered tremulously, trying to be calm, "a far worse one than when I saw you last. I have discovered I was wrong in thinking Captain Banks was my father. I do not know my own name, and I appear as a deception."

"Lady Stonehenge tells me," he said, "you have had many suitors, and that she thinks you left your heart in Ireland."

"And may I ask, Lord Kingscastle, is it kind of two whom I considered amongst my best friends to be criticising me in that way? Can you tell me the name of that rose?" pointing to a flower.

"I cannot, Miss Banks; but I can tell you you completely misjudge Lady Stonehenge and myself if you think either of us in word or deed would hurt you. I thought you once might have had a warmer feeling for me than mere friendship. It wounds me

greatly ; you seem to have taken a dislike to me and avoided me."

Gertrude got greatly agitated, and there was a far-away look in her eyes, as if she were gazing into an unseen world.

"Why do you say nothing, Gertrude," he said ; "can you give me no hope? I love you ; I think I loved you from the first time I saw you. I never loved any woman but you. Do you love me?"

After a long pause, poor Gertrude said in a clear, incisive voice : "No, Lord Kingscastle, I do not love you. I respect you ; I am deeply grateful to you. I would do anything in my power to serve you ; but I cannot marry you."

"I thought you loved me just a little once," he said sorrowfully, "and I hoped when we met a few days ago I might win you. I would have tried my chance in Dublin, except I was then only a student, and could not support a wife ; now I can."

"Please," said Gertrude, "let us now end the subject. What you wish, Lord Kingscastle, is quite out of the question."

"One word more, dear Miss Banks ; forgive me ; perhaps I ought not to ask ; still, pardon me in this one question : have I a rival?"

"You ought not to have asked," replied Gertrude, smiling sadly, "but I will answer you : there is no other."

She turned, ran away into the house, flew up to her room, threw herself on her bed, and sobbed as if her heart would break.

Lady Stonehenge had watched the pair from a

corridor, saw the girl running into the house, and heard her sobbing in her room, which was next Lady Stonehenge's. After leaving her for some time, the old woman, who loved the poor lonely thing dearly, went and tapped on her door, and, being told to come in, thoughtfully waited to let her compose herself, and then entered. She found Gertrude lavaging her face, and when she looked around she appeared calm.

"Gertrude," said Lady Stonehenge, "I do not like a blab; still, one can be too silent, too reserved. I feel like a mother to you. I do not want to pry into your secrets; still, perhaps, I might help you. I fear you may take some step you will afterwards regret."

Seeing a surprised, hurt look on the girl's face, she added, hastily: "Not, my dear, anything wrong, nothing of the kind, but through a feeling of not wanting to injure another, you may make yourself and Lord Kingscastle both miserable; it may not have been wise of you to have refused him."

"How do you know, Lady Stonehenge? how can you possibly know I did?"

"It is very plain, my dear child, what has happened, and I know why you did so; simply, you thought you would drag him down, if you married him. And you told him a fib, you naughty child: you said you did not love him."

The poor motherless girl threw herself into her kind friend's arms and wept afresh; still, in a less violent manner than before.

Lady Stonehenge let her have her cry quietly out, and then they had a long chat.

Lady Stonehenge was not surprised when Lord Kingscastle seized the opportunity of Gertrude going to an archery practice to have his say with her.

"She says," said the young man, sighing deeply, "she does not love me. I have got the answer I expect Church Stretton got."

Lord Kingscastle added many more words, and Lady Stonehenge listened to him quietly; and he ended by asking her: "What am I to do?"

"Wait, Lord Kingscastle; it will all come right. Your case is quite different from Church Stretton's. She does not love him; she loves you."

Now, the kind diplomatist was loyal to her young companion; she did not betray her confidences with her, nor in truth did Gertrude tell her that she loved Lord Kingscastle.

"How do you know?" said he.

Lady Stonehenge laughed.

"Why, I have been a long time in the world. I had four daughters who married, and by this time I know something of a young girl. Why, when she looks at you, you silly boy, she has the light of love in her eyes. I watched her with you and poor Church Stretton; but now do not go and spoil all. The girl is as proud as Lucifer. The good Marquis told me he is determined to investigate her case when we return to town. Goodness knows what may turn up."

"I do not care whose daughter she is; I will marry her for herself."

"Quite right," said the old lady, "and I love you myself for saying so, though you need not look at me ; I have no light of love for you in my old eyes. Still, the girl is proud, the right kind of pride when not carried too far ; and it would kill her if she thought your old uncle, the Bishop, considered you had thrown yourself away. You must wait ; be kindly and respectful with her ; do not ask her again, however, until I give you leave" ; and she shook her finger playfully at him.

No people could have behaved better to Gertrude than the Marchioness of Wrekin and young Lady Violet Manning, called by her father after his favourite sister, our former friend, Lady Violet Malet. The Marchioness loved her only son, and she and her husband saw clearly he was attached to Gertrude, and they did not oppose him in it. He and his father had always been friends, more like brothers than father and son ; and when the father asked him about the girl from observations the Marchioness had made at Lady Stonehenge's, he did not deny it. The Marquis thought then Gertrude was the daughter of Captain Banks, and though she might have no fortune, was of an aristocratic family, connected with the peerage, and put no obstacle in the way. When Gertrude herself told him the true story, he showed himself worthy of his noble descent, and, come what might of it, he resolved to assist the girl in tracing her lineage, the more so as she so strangely reminded him of his mother and pet sister.

The party broke up shortly afterwards. Lord Kingscastle tried to forget his disappointment in his

truly missionary work amongst the English heathen, who, poor people, plainly showed that they had not "heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." Lady Stonehenge and Gertrude returned to Grosvenor Square; and the girl sang at a series of concerts, for which she was well paid. She appeared in the bills always as "Miss Frederica Browning," she and Lady Stonehenge agreeing it was better not to use professionally her name of "Banks"; in fact, it was with great difficulty Lady Stonehenge induced her to keep, in private life, the name of Banks. Gertrude argued it was a deception, and had already misled people, such as the Wrekins; but Lady Stonehenge showed her she had not taken the name, but had it given to her by Miss Banks, who had adopted her, and that she must not give it up until she had ascertained her true name.

"That will never be, dear, kind Lady Stonehenge."

"I do not know, my dear; have patience."

Gertrude was energetic and occupied herself in many ways. She had met so many trials in life, she had lost the sanguineness of youth; her natural love for others and personal unselfishness got her over many an anxious hour. Lady Stonehenge was astonished at her forethought, resourcefulness, and adaptability. The kind old peeress had not been, with all her large-hearted charity, very easy to put up with, either by her daughters or former attendants. Gertrude, schooled in managing an imperious, exacting old lady like Miss Banks, and then cast adrift on the sea of life in her own frail bark, found Lady Stonehenge's house a very harbour of refuge,

and willingly occupied herself from morning to night zealously planning for Lady Stonehenge, and striving to anticipate all her whims and wishes. Her observant patroness saw all this, and her heart went out to the motherless girl, and she mothered her as if she were a fifth daughter—were not the other four married and settled?—and she took this girl to her heart, and was all the happier for it.

CHAPTER XXIV.

TOTAL ABSTINENCE FROM ALCOHOL.

IT is a very long time since we heard anything of poor Ambrose Malet, who, when advanced in middle life, had to exchange the sheep-walks of his beloved Wicklow Mountains for the Australian bush. Malet was like many another Irishman, and many a Britisher too: "when he had nothing to do, he did it." This may be an Irish bull, still it corresponds to the Italian *dolce far niente*. An Irishman has more fun and versatility in him than his Saxon brother; and he can therefore "do nothing" more easily and with less annoyance to his neighbour than the more practical, business-like Englishman.

Malet went as a shepherd in New South Wales, and speedily rose to be a confidential manager and then a partner. He had in Ireland picked up a great deal of veterinary knowledge, and understood all the infantile diseases that lambs are heir to. He had an infallible remedy for curing scab. He was an admirable shearer himself, and knew how to instruct others. He was liked by the natives; he shot a bushranger dead; and he altogether was a success in the colony, and one of the most valuable men in it. He never was a drunkard, and became practically a total abstainer up country, where he had

the commonsense to see it was necessary for him to show a good example. When he went to Sydney, however, he unbent; he was a popular companion with a good story and an atmosphere of geniality about him; and his appearance in the Sydney Club he joined was the signal for "shouting" for drinks all round in welcome to this "poor exile from Erin." The end of this indulgence was that Malet found himself in hospital, knocked up by too many treats. He was attended by a pretty young nurse who spoke to him in the Wicklow accent. This touched Malet's naturally soft heart, and he became friends with her, and she turned out to be Kitty Simpson, the daughter of his old friend, Mark Simpson, Curate of Kingscastle, and Mrs. Simpson, who as a widow had been housekeeper to the Earl of Clara.

Mrs. Simpson, who kept a boarding-house in Sydney, came to see him.

Malet recovered, and showed that determination of character which many who saw him only in his pleasure moments did not credit him with. He had already been a total abstainer in the country; he now also became one in town.

Mrs. Simpson—a thoroughly good woman, a real lady, though a poor one, and always industrious—strengthened him in his good resolutions, and he lodged with her during his convalescence. He was thriving when he became ill; he now forged ahead, and, after a while, brought off a couple of the young Simpsons, and taught them shepherding, and promoted them to be managers, and gave them, as he had previously got himself, shares in his

business. He also took to buying building lots in Sydney and others of the then rising towns. Everything he touched seemed to prosper. His chance acquaintance with the Simpsons was an advantage to both. Mrs. Simpson still kept on her boarding-house, and Malet lived there when in town. Whilst sitting in the smoking-room of his Club one hot, dusty day in Sydney, Malet was in an indolent manner reading the latest copy of *The Times*—in those days a very old copy indeed. An advertisement in the Agony Column accidentally caught his eye. His attention was at once arrested, and his face completely changed from lazy indifference to the keenest excitement.

Malet was greatly altered in appearance, but decidedly for the better. He had lost the devil-may-care look he formerly had, and got instead the air of a successful man of business. The management of a large concern had given a thoughtful, practical look to his face. He was now a resolute, resourceful man, getting on in the world; still, his face would light up as of old, and the merry twinkle in his eye, and a cheery word for everyone, never left him.

The advertisement which engrossed his attention ran as follows: "Any person giving information which will lead to the discovery of a daughter, now aged about twenty-five years, of Ambrose Malet and Lady Violet Malet, his wife, will be liberally rewarded. Apply to X.Y.Z., *Times* Office."

Malet walked restlessly up and down the room,

visibly agitated, and altogether unconscious of the surprised looks of the bystanders.

"Why, what is the matter, Malet?" said one of them, who was a particular friend of his; "is it good news or bad news?"

"Heaven only knows," said Malet. He then went back to the paper, copied out the short advertisement, and, quickly putting on his hat, left the room.

"I hope it is good news," said the man who addressed him. "There's not a better fellow in the colony. He gave me a shove forward one time; he never touches a man he does not benefit him. Well as I know him out here, I know nothing of his previous life. I think he has a history, and I fear it was a sad one. I heard he married a titled lady, and that she and their only child died. I did not hear this from him."

"Most of us have a ghost in the closet," said another, laughing. "It may be merely that wool is up, and Malet wants a quick sale. No one ever caught the market better than he does, still, he is perfectly straight, and his word is as good as his bond. He can go home when he pleases; he has made his pile, and sent a good deal over already to invest in England in sure things."

Malet hurried off to our old friend, Mrs. Simpson, who lived near the Club. She opened the door for him herself. She looked happy and thriving also. On seeing Malet, she exclaimed: "What is it, Amby?"

"I do not know, dear old friend," he said; "the

clock has gone back a quarter of a century. Read that!"

Mrs. Simpson took the slip of paper on which Malet had copied the advertisement, and, glancing at it, handed it back to him, quietly saying: "I saw this already to-day."

"Then why, in the name of all that is sacred, did you not show it to me?" he answered angrily, almost fiercely.

"For the very good reason, Amby, that it came enclosed in a letter from England by the post which arrived after you left this morning. Now you must just have a cup of tea, and compose yourself. The news may be good news, but do not build too much upon it."

"Can it be, Sally, that my child is alive, and that I have not toiled all these years for nothing; that I have her still left to me, anyhow?" he cried breathlessly. "The news I got ages ago that she was dead cannot be true."

Good Mrs. Simpson was frightened at the man's appearance. Nothing frightens a woman more than when a strong man gives way, and she insisted on his taking the tea before she handed him the letter. It was dated several months back from an obscure street in London, and ran as follows:—

"DEAR MRS. SIMPSON,

"I learned your address accidentally the other day, and God put it into my head to try and atone for the terrible wrong I did with others nearly thirty long years ago. I never could get it out of my head,

thinking of it by day, and dreaming of it by night. If I only knew where the poor father is, I would write to him also, but I do not know. You must remember me, if not by name, then as own maid to Lady Henrietta Manning, poor Lady Violet's aunt. Lady Henrietta came over to be with Lady Violet in her confinement, and I went with her; and I, having been a nursery governess in my young days, and afterwards had children of my own, was handy about babies, and I took care of the motherless child when her mother died. Lady Violet with, as we thought, her dying breath, though she lived for some hours longer, besought me to tell her broken-hearted husband, who was out at the time, to have the baby christened Gertrude, after her friend the Countess's little girl; and I carried out her wish, and told Mr. Malet, and the baby was called so. She begged of me, as a mother myself, to mother the poor little thing when she was gone; and, God forgive me, I lied to her, and did not, though at the time I intended to do so. When Lady Henrietta and I returned to England with the child, we went to Lady Henrietta's house at Ludlow, and the child was shown to everyone as poor Lady Violet's daughter. Lord Arthur, who lived with Lady Henrietta, after a few months came home, and Lady Henrietta called me into the parlour, and asked me could I keep a secret if I were well paid for it. Now, at the time, I wanted to apprentice my son in the city, and was badly off for money, and I asked her what the secret was.

“Well,” says she, ‘I have got a grand offer from a

rich lady to adopt Gertrude ; but Gertrude must drop her name, and we must pretend she has died ; and she must pass for Miss Banks's niece, the daughter of a scapegrace brother of hers. Lord Arthur and I are too poor to keep her and educate her, and it is the best thing for her.'

" 'And why,' I asked, 'is it necessary to pretend she is dead?'

" 'Because,' she answered, cross-like, 'Miss Banks wants her to think she is really her niece, and to cut off all relations with her own people. Ask me no more questions. Will you do it or not for £20?'

"I took the £20, trying to persuade myself it was for the poor little thing's good. I knew Lord Arthur and Lady Henrietta were as poor as church mice, and I never had a day's happiness since ; but I did think at the time it was for the baby's good. I knew Lady Henrietta wrote to Mr. Malet the child was dead, for I posted the letter with a black seal on it. The worst is to come. I found out, through Lord Arthur's valet, that he got money which would have gone to the baby if she were known to be still alive. It may be a poor excuse for me to try to make for my violation of my solemn promise to the dying mother, that I heard the girl was well cared for, and brought up and highly educated, and had everything her heart could have wished for ; but that was no doubt the case. Then Miss Banks died suddenly without leaving Gertrude a sixpence, and the poor thing had to join a low theatrical company her sham father was fiddler to. I went to the manager of the company, and he told me two years ago Gertrude

went to live with a young man in Dublin, when the company was playing there, and he would have nothing more to do with her; that it was a great pity, as she was very handsome—a born actress, and had a fine voice. He said he was obliged to dismiss her father for drunkenness; and he believed he died in the poorhouse hospital. I saved a little money, and I got a small legacy; and as my children are out in the world and doing for themselves, I made up my mind to undo, as far as I could, the great wrong I was party to against a helpless infant; and I have advertised for news of her repeatedly, but I can learn nothing. I enclose you a cutting. Do you, dear Mrs. Simpson, know anything of her or of her real father, Ambrose Malet? I heard he had gone to Australia. May God forgive me my sins!

“Your humble servant,

“MARY ANNE BROWN.”

Poor Malet's eyes sparkled with joy until the closing sentences of the letter, which told of his long-lost daughter's sad fall and disappearance.

“I will go and try to find my child. She has been more sinned against than sinning,” he said, endeavouring to be calm.

He and his good friend consulted. Mrs. Simpson wrote to Mary Anne Brown, telling her Malet's address, and that he was going to Europe.

Malet first thought of writing to the Marquis of Wrekin, who, he said, was an honest, steady fellow and fond of his sister Violet; but he ended by not doing so.

Mrs. Simpson then told him she was thinking of a trip to the old country herself, to see her children there, and to take an unmarried daughter and two grandchildren with her. She had been thinking of the trip for some time, but now resolved to carry it out, for the purpose of helping Malet, who seemed quite knocked up with the news, and the strain on him of the uncertainty which surrounded his daughter's fate. Malet had put forward her sons, and she was a good woman, and wanted now to assist him, and watch over him. She dreaded he might lose his reason, and having her to soothe him seemed a comfort to him.

Malet began to put his affairs in order, and trusted much to the young Simpsons, who proved worthy of his confidence ; and, after a couple of journeys up country, he and the Simpson party sailed for England.

CHAPTER XXV.

A DEATH-BED SCENE RECALLED.

AMBROSE MALET, Mrs. Simpson, and her daughter and granddaughters arrived in London. They soon found out Mary Anne Brown, but heard, to their great disappointment, she was unable to trace Gertrude Banks.

Malet went to Scotland Yard: all sorts of differently worded advertisements were inserted in various newspapers—all in vain.

Malet, as may be remembered, was very musical. He saw an announcement of a great concert for a city hospital, with several names well known even to him, though he had been for many years abroad, and also the name of a young lady—Miss Frederica Browning—described as a recent *débutante*, whom he had not previously heard of. He got tickets for the performance for his party. It commenced with instrumental music and some songs, and then the new star (Miss Browning) appeared, and sang with a voice of wonderful flexibility—a naturally fine voice, carefully trained. Malet sat entranced, and then it gradually dawned on him he had seen the face and heard the voice previously—long ago, he could not remember where. After a time, fond as he was of music and singing, he became heedless of both,

thinking, pondering, and wondering where it could be. His thoughts then, strange to say, went back to his short, tragically short, married life, which had become a dream to him, and his lovely bride's fresh, young face came up before him.

When other singers succeeded Miss Browning, Malet ceased listening. He forgot time and place; he was back again with the wife of his youth. He saw her before him, heard her bird-like voice singing sweetly about his house, full of health and joyousness. He then fancied he saw her on her death-bed, and heard her asking him to raise her in his arms and kiss her, and bring their child to her that she might see and kiss the helpless infant for the last time; he saw her in his vision fall back gasping for breath, as she passed away to another world. Malet then became nearly unconscious, and was falling from his seat when Mrs. Simpson looked round with alarm and spoke to him. He was recalled back as it were by her voice to the present world, and with a great effort composed himself.

Mrs. Simpson whispered, "Would you like to leave?"

As she was saying this, Miss Browning came on again. Malet made no answer, and Mrs. Simpson wonderingly saw he was now listening attentively, apparently absorbed in her singing, and she prudently did not worry him for an answer. Gradually, however, she saw the abstracted look return to his face, and he became deadly pale. With the help of a gentleman sitting near them, Malet was assisted to a room off the orchestra, and he had scarcely

reached it when he swooned and became wholly unconscious.

They had brought him to the nearest room at hand. He had slowly begun to revive, when suddenly Miss Browning came in off the stage, having sung two extra songs, carrying in each hand a magnificent bouquet, and her attendant more flowers, with which the stage had been almost covered. Malet had only partially come back to life ; he could not recollect where he was ; when, as he thought, a vision of the past came up before him—his blooming Violet, lovely, radiant in her beauty, on her wedding-day. He staggered forward, intending to clasp her in his arms, when he was forcibly held back by angry spectators, whose pity had turned to disgust, thinking the unfortunate man had been drinking too freely.

"He is drunk," said one of them; "send for the police."

Mrs. Simpson came forward, and explained.

"He is not drunk: he has been anxious of late; he has been looking for a lost daughter; possibly the poor fellow thinks he has found her."

Miss Browning, who was no other than our old friend, Gertrude, was full of sympathy.

Malet looked helpless for a moment. Then, when he had somewhat recovered, he said in a trembling, feeble voice: "I beg the young lady's pardon. I was dreaming, or in a trance, and I thought I saw my wife, who died many years ago."

Gertrude looked at him, and perhaps her mind was on her own trouble, and she had been deeply moved by his pathetic look, and became anxious

to help him. She thought of the likeness to the miniature in the locket.

"You need not apologize, sir," she said gently; "May I ask did I remind you of anyone?"

"You did, young lady; you are the very image of my wife. I lost her by death; and I lost my daughter, who was stolen from me."

"Am I so very like your wife, dear sir?" she said, with a gentle, sympathetic voice which thrilled the poor man, usually so strong, now so weak.

"Yes," he said, with difficulty mastering his emotion, "just what she was thirty long years ago."

The people stood astonished. Gertrude was called for her last song. She begged Malet to stay in her room until her return, and Mrs. Simpson remained with him.

On Gertrude's return explanations took place between Malet and her which went far to show she was his missing daughter, and he her missing father. Gertrude had her mother's watch with her, which Malet at once recognised. Though badly able to afford the price of it, he had bought it for his bride as a wedding gift.

Lady Stonehenge communicated with the Marquis of Wrekin. The letters and papers handed by poor old dying Captain Banks to Gertrude, the remarkable likeness of Gertrude to her grandmother and mother, the testimony of Mary Anne Browne, the miniature and watch, more than established the identity of Gertrude.

The money which tempted the fraud was all gone;

but Ambrose Malet said he had plenty for his child and himself.

Lady Stonehenge wrote the following letter to Lord Kingscastle :—

“DEAR LORD KINGSCASTLE,

“You will be glad to hear Gertrude, by a mere accident, whilst singing at a concert, was discovered by her father, Mr. Ambrose Malet, owing to the remarkable likeness she bears to her mother, who was the sister of the Marquis of Wrekin. Her father became extremely wealthy in Australia. You were anxious to marry the girl when she was nameless and penniless. If you have not developed Mark Tapley’s peculiarities, come and stay with me, and preach in St. Paul’s. The Bishop of London wants a good man who is worth listening to and can be heard.

“Yours ever sincerely,

“AUGUSTA STONEHENGE.”

Lord Kingscastle accepted the invitation, and shortly afterwards Dr. Greene got the following letter :—

“BELOVED PHYSICIAN,

“I write to tell you for what you kept your patient alive. I have found my father. It came round in a curious way. He happened to hear me singing at a concert, and recognised me by my likeness to my poor mother. I am the daughter of Ambrose Malet, of Kingscastle, and Lady Violet Malet, who, if she had lived, would be now sister to my chivalrous

supporter, the Marquis of Wrekin. All this, dear friend, you may have heard from others ; but I want you to hear the following bit of news absolutely from me before anyone else tells you. I am engaged to be married to Stephen. The foolish fellow wanted to marry me when I had no name ; and, oh ! doctor, I had to refuse him—a terrible struggle for me between love and duty. I could not let him ruin himself. Tell Mrs. Greene and Fanny. Fanny will be my chief bridesmaid. It cannot be, however, for a long time, as Lord Clara is very ill ; and my father says he must have me a little while to himself before he parts with me. My father has good means ; but, oh ! what kindness I have met with ! I never could have believed there were so many good people in the world if I had not been so helpless and lonely and in need of actual helpful care and assistance, and, what (call me foolish if you like) I value more than anything else, I received genuine sympathy from people who, because they were true and sincere themselves, took an unknown stranger on trust and believed in her. Lady Stonehenge (Mrs. Greene not being here) is more than the fondest and wisest mother could be to me. I cannot write more at present, my heart is too full. From your always faithful and ever grateful patient,

“GERTRUDE MALET.”

It must be remembered Gertrude was of a naturally romantic, enthusiastic nature, and that these tendencies had been strengthened and developed by her short theatrical life, and, indeed, by all the stirring

occurrences of her eventful career. Perhaps the world does not give excitable, highly-strung temperaments as much credit as they deserve for deep feeling. The silent, reticent woman may feel as deeply as her emotional sister, but possibly not more so; and undoubtedly the world is moved round more by the stirring and energetic than the patient plodder. It is requisite to have strong wheelers to bear up life's stage-coach; but it would not move so rapidly, if at all, without spirited leaders to pull it along.

We also give the following letter which the worthy Bishop of Ballinasloe received in his Western See:—

“MY DEAR UNCLE,

“Only think Gertrude turns out to be the daughter of your old friend Malet, and niece of the Marquis of Wrekin, and I am engaged to be married to her. You knew my secret long ago. She refused me last autumn at Wrekin Castle. I thought then it was because she did not love me. It now turns out that the real reason was because she was nameless, and thought it would drag me down. Come over and stop with me, and let us go together to Blackberry Hall. It is our duty to do so, though my father may not know us, and the Countess does not like us. I wrote and told the Countess, but got no reply.

“Your ever affectionate

“STEPHEN.”

Lady Stonehenge gave a great reception in honour of Gertrude's engagement. Lady Mildred Northallerton was there, and greeted the girl in a

characteristic way : " I have to congratulate you. It is a great ease to my mind. I feared I had been imposed on by you, and that I had inflicted a fraud on Lady Stonehenge. It is all right, however : everything is accounted for by the Manning and Wrekin blood ; it is all good, every drop of it, and still not too goody-goody. That young man of yours can preach, but get him to read to you and soften down his Irish brogue ; you have a good accent yourself, and it must annoy you. I suppose at present you think he is perfect ; quite right—until you are married, but don't spoil a good husband more than you would a good dog. Train him in the very first heyday of the engagement, whilst he is still docile ; and then once you marry him always keep his nose to the grinding-stone."

Lady Mildred was a privileged person, and could say what she liked, and her bark was worse than her bite ; still the bark was sometimes too shrill, and irritated a sensitive ear.

The Marquis kissed his newly found niece tenderly and said : " My dear niece, I was willing to be a father to you, but I must now take second place and only be an uncle. It is well you are caught at last yourself and can catch no more young men. Church Stretton is off to India as an aide-de-camp to the Commander of the Forces there."

Our old friend Malet was happy, but did not take Gertrude away from her kind friend. With all his youthful exuberance and love of sport, he was a shrewd man and knew his backwoods experience might not suit his daughter ; besides, he intended to

return to Australia and arrange his affairs before finally settling at home. He then told Gertrude he would leave her with Lady Stonehenge; but Gertrude absolutely refused, and insisted she must go out with him: she said she had found her father and would not lose sight of him again. Malet was touched at this; still he appealed to Lady Stonehenge, who, to his surprise, supported Gertrude, and it was agreed the father and daughter were to make a trip together to Sydney. Unexpected events happened, however, which upset these plans.

Lady Stonehenge liked Malet. Having mixed a great deal in the world, she was not shocked by his brogue, his want of education, or rustic manners intensified by his bush life. She saw a resemblance in him in character to her favourite Gertrude. She perceived in both father and daughter the same enthusiastic, lovable natures, scorning mere conventionalities, and withal with a tact which prevented them from wounding other people's feelings or doing ridiculous or *outré* things. Gertrude in her face did not resemble her father, except in a twinkle in her deep blue eyes, such as is seldom found amongst Saxon beauties.

Gertrude in these days was very happy. Those who have known want and misery ought, and generally can, best appreciate plenty and freedom from care.

One feels wretched for a moment after the curtain falls on a great tragedy, when the good people have been all murdered or become insane; then there is a compensating rebound as the sensation of real life

returns with an appetite for a good supper. On the contrary, when in a comedy all the good people have been made happy and the bad punished, we soon are disillusioned and become painfully conscious we have only been playing with life, and are unpleasantly called back to the real ills that flesh is heir to; and, the pleasurable excitement of the comedy having evaporated, we feel we must bear our own burdens still, and that life is not all "beer and skittles," as we might foolishly desire it to be.

Mary Anne Brown was very penitent; still, she was not indeed so bad as poor Violet's inhuman uncle and aunt, Lord Arthur and Lady Henrietta Manning; and she had tried to atone for her fault. She was forgiven and disappears out of our story. The chief offenders, the uncle and aunt, were both dead, and had squandered and lost all the money which ought to have gone to Gertrude, in speculating in the railway mania, when Hudson was the "Railway King."

CHAPTER XXVI.

WAS THE BISHOP OF BALLINASLOE AT PUNCHESTOWN ?

LORD KINGSCASTLE received, after a considerable interval, a letter from his uncle, the Bishop, in reply to the one he had written announcing his engagement. It was as follows :—

“DEAR STEPHEN,

“I was delayed writing to you from the Palace, through absence in Connemara. My heart went out to you both, my dear son, as I love to call you, and I will welcome Gertrude as a beloved daughter. I am more than satisfied at your news. I never would have opposed your match with a clever, beautiful, thoroughly good woman, as Gertrude was and is, even if she had been nameless and penniless. I would have always felt convinced she had gentle blood in her veins, though we might not exactly have found out the source; still, now that we do know, it is all the better. Wrekin Mannings were always well to the front, from Crecy to Waterloo, and, what was far better, took an active part in establishing civil and religious liberty from Magna Charta to the Bill of Rights. I believe in a good strain in human beings as I do in horses and dogs. A cart-horse may be driven through a field,

spreading manure, but never could win the Downshire or Conyngham Cup at Punchestown; and a mongrel cur would spring a grouse. Still there are all sorts of good strains, and I welcome an alliance with honest old Amby Malet. I am writing to him, telling him so, and that we both must walk the Castle Hill next August together, though we burst our windpipes in the effort. A Malet never turned his back on a foe, and never did a dishonourable act, though the family did many wild and foolish things. I respect wise people; but on a yachting cruise if the whole of the company were wise, time might hang heavily on one's hands. You must want money, and I have plenty. I hope to reach your quarters this day week; we will then go to Blackberry Hall together—a duty, as you say, but a painful one. My poor brother will not know us (if we have been told the truth). We may not be allowed to judge this for ourselves by my austere sister-in-law.

“Ever affectionately yours,

“FITZROY BALLINASLOE.”

We know the Bishop in his pre-episcopal days could fill a game-bag. Was he ever at Punchestown? We know he was a good judge of a horse; further than that we cannot say. If he ever were there, we can confidently assert he conducted himself like a Christian and a gentleman. It seems a dangerous advice to give—that amusements, lawful in themselves, should be avoided because they are

liable to be abused. If either the theatre or the racecourse became a place where no person who valued his or her good name could appear, the very best check on the production of immoral plays or wild betting would be removed. It must not be forgotten that the earliest means adopted for teaching people the life of Christ and Bible stories was the stage, and that the racecourse improves the breed of horses, to the benefit of mankind. In their own way the noblemen and gentlemen who run racehorses fairly and without any suspicion of foul play, and who lead their local teams in the cricket fields, are thoroughly practical philanthropists, who keep the national sports on a high level of honour, and rescue them from degenerating into rowdy scenes of drunkenness, gambling, and swindling.

Blackberry Hall, where the Earl of Clara was lying, it was thought, on his death-bed, was the very ancient seat of a very ancient family. Wealth had come to the owners in the grandmother of the second wife of the Earl of Clara. Her father had made a fortune in the early days of Indian commerce, and the money had remained in the family, and had grown by accretions until it came to the Countess, who married at a mature age. Our poor friend, the Earl of Clara, married to get a home, his fortunes being at a very low ebb. He got, however, only the name of a home, and certainly no home comforts. A son was the only issue of the marriage. The Countess was a shrew, and started violently hostile to the Earl's sons by his first wife, and morbidly jealous that her own son would not succeed to the title. She was a hard

woman ; and, like most people who take the world hardly, she herself met with little sympathy or kindness. She hated Michael, the eldest son of the Earl of Clara, and he returned the feeling with interest. She held the purse-strings, and eventually he was forced to exchange, as has been shown, into a line regiment, and died in India. Of the twins, she preferred George ; he flattered her, and occasionally succeeded in extracting doles of money. Without being actually in the conspiracy to oust Stephen from his rights, she played into George's hands by keeping Stephen away from his father ; and descended to such petty matters as having Stephen's letters, after his eldest brother's death, still addressed to him as " The Hon. Stephen Corbet," thus ignoring his right to be styled " Viscount Kingscastle."

Blackberry Hall was managed on the most economical principles ; every person, as far as possible, was on board-wages. There were no old retainers left. The Countess would not even leave the Earl his old valet, whom she regarded as a spy. The one question in which the Earl overruled her was, her son Conrad was sent to Eton. She would have preferred keeping him at home with a tutor. The one soft spot in her heart was for this son, and, curious to say, he never returned her affection. Little as he saw of him, he looked up to and worshipped Stephen, with that glorious, unalloyed admiration which a young boy feels for an elder brother who has those qualities which he himself is ambitious to excel in. Embarrassed and hard pressed as the poor Earl was, he followed the

traditions of his house, and sent his sons to Eton. The Countess, however, succeeded in giving Stephen a great disappointment in preventing him being sent up to King's College, Cambridge, from Eton, and having him sent instead to Trinity, Dublin. Except for the bitter feeling which she had against him, and her delight in thwarting his wishes, no one could understand why a clever youth like him was not sent up to a college where, being an Eton boy, he was sure to get a Fellowship. If Dublin cost more, the Countess did not pay for it—the Bishop did.

Conrad was not cunning or underhand; he was naturally truthful and manly; still, he early learned to conceal things from his mother, and she never knew that he wrote boyish letters to Stephen, and poured out his feelings to him in a way he did to no other person. Stephen used to answer him. The correspondence had no secrets in it, and nothing which the Countess could have objected to, except her mad freak to try and separate him from his Irish brothers. She was one of those narrow-minded women who promoted the jealousy that should, if possible, be removed between the two islands. According to her, no good thing could come out of that thriftless, lazy, lying, bigoted place, Ireland; and as to Wicklow people, they were, in her opinion, the worst of a bad lot.

The Bishop and Stephen arrived one cold, bleak January day at Blackberry Hall. No carriage was sent to meet them at the station. In those primitive days a railway station was not at every man's door in England. At Blackberry Hall now you can hear

the shrill whistle, and see the smoke of the engine from the windows; then the nearest station was ten good English miles off. With the greatest difficulty the Bishop and his nephew procured an old rattletrap carriage, and a broken-kneed, broken-winded horse, with a driver who in his early days had sweated so much to be a light-weight in a racing stable, that when he gave up the saddle for the box-seat, he had apparently lost, by disuse, the art of putting on flesh, and looked a weasel-faced, dried-up old fellow, whose eye never brightened except at the sight of a glass of gin or home-brewed ale.

After many difficulties, and going the last five miles in the pitch-dark night, without so much as a star to lead them, the travellers arrived at the Hall. The door was opened by a surly servant who had just given, after some words with her Ladyship, notice he would leave, and had been given a counter-notice of dismissal.

The Bishop had written that he and his nephew were coming; and as there was no house near where they could be accommodated, the Countess had been forced to have rooms ready for them.

In answer to the Bishop, the servant replied gruffly, he could not say how the Earl was; he had not heard, and referred the inquirer to the Earl's own man and nurse.

The Hall looked bleak and gloomy; there were no fires, except where absolutely necessary, and then struggling, heart-broken ones whose efforts at producing a cheery blaze had been nipped in the bud by plenty of slack.

The Countess, after a time, appeared. She had, when a child, got deaf from a bad attack of scarlatina, and always communicated with others in speaking by the aid of an ear-trumpet. She contrived to turn a seeming disadvantage into a means of getting rid of a troublesome querist. She always began the conversation herself, and could do so, as she kept the trumpet carefully in her own possession, and the person who was interviewing her could do nothing but listen, so it was only wasting breath to speak to one who could not and did not want to hear.

The Countess, on this occasion, in a few disjointed, unpunctuated sentences, which it was difficult to follow, explained to her hearers it was impossible for either of them to speak to or even look at the Earl; that his heart was feeble, and even the slightest excitement would probably kill him; and that he had not wanted to see either of them; and that it was useless for them to have taken the trouble and gone to the expense of coming. She stopped when she liked, being mistress, not only of the house, but also of the conversation, and then, in a reluctant way, handed the trumpet to the Bishop, who contrived to say—the Countess being very fidgety and impatient—he would like to see his brother, if possible, even when asleep, and when there would be no risk of exciting him. The trumpet was whipped away with a sudden jerk; the Countess said: “Quite impossible.”

Stephen made a grab at the instrument; the lady was, however, too quick for him, and put it beyond

his reach, and, muttering dinner was postponed for them, left the room.

Dinner was a dismal meal. The Countess presided without her trumpet, which she had taken the precaution to leave in her own room; and the only other person at the table, in addition to the two unwelcome guests, was a severe-looking old aunt of the Countess, whom, as the saying is, the Countess "favoured," being indeed very like her. This old dame was almost as deaf as her niece; still, by filling the lungs carefully, and then suddenly exhausting them with a bellow, Stephen managed to keep up an intermittent conversation with her, which rather resembled an irregular guerilla warfare, as she disagreed with the most colourless and harmless propositions made to her. He had a fine, deep, bell-tongued voice; but even with him physical exhaustion did its work, and as the Bishop and Stephen tacitly agreed that a dialogue between them, which the two ladies could perceive but not hear, would be impolite, dead silence soon prevailed, broken occasionally by an order to a servant.

As soon as dinner was over the Bishop escaped, and, without confiding even in Stephen, carried out a plan he had prepared. He commenced by putting a half-crown in the hand of the surly groom of the chambers, and asked him to bring him to the Earl's valet.

The valet was found, and, on getting a sovereign, agreed to secure the Bishop ten minutes' chat with the Earl; but said it could not be done until after eleven o'clock, when the Countess retired for the

night, and added, "You must also square the night nurse."

The Bishop read in his own room by the light of a single candle as best he could, until he was called by the nurse, to whom he gave another sovereign ; he was then admitted to his brother's room.

To his surprise and joy—for he was very fond of him—he found his brother better than he expected. The Earl was delighted to see him, and evidently took in the situation quickly, that it was a surprise and secret visit, and must be a very short one. After a very few words the Earl said : " Fitzroy, you have something you wish to say to me ; what is it ? "

" Merely this, Michael, who is your heir ? "

" Stephen, of course, Fitzroy ; why do you ask ? "

" Because George says he is the elder. "

The old man started with anger, and the Bishop was terrified lest he might have killed him, as the Countess predicted any excitement would ; but no such ill consequences followed. He was merely roused ; his mind was quite clear, and his voice distinct.

" Fitzroy, Stephen is the elder. Mrs. Simpson knows it ; Father O'Toole knows it ; Nancy Bradley knows it ; the whole country heard of it. George was always a bad boy. "

" Unfortunately, Michael, Nancy Bradley says George is the elder ; and we do not know where Mrs. Simpson is : she went to Australia. "

The Bishop had not heard of Mrs. Simpson's return. The Earl was visibly agitated and about to answer, when the door opened and the Countess

appeared. Her own maid had not been bribed, and therefore had remained faithful to her mistress.

The Countess came in with her white dressing-gown on, and had the good Bishop fairly at a disadvantage; he was caught in a clandestine visit, obtained by bribery and corruption. His brother was evidently agitated, more perhaps at the ghostly appearance of his dreaded wife than at the startling revelation of his son George's villainy. She made good use of her opportunities.

"My Lord Bishop, this underhand course of yours is, I may say, eminently Irish, characteristic of an absolutely unreliable people. If you have killed your brother, his blood will be on your head. I warned you. Your confederates will be dismissed in the morning. Please leave the room."

Even if the Bishop had a reply, he could make none, as of course the Countess omitted to bring her trumpet, her only means of conversing with the wicked outside world.

The Bishop retired. He and his nephew breakfasted alone the next morning. They were informed the carriage would be at the door at a certain hour to convey them to the station, and they went.

If the Countess did not "welcome the coming," she certainly did "speed the parting guest."

CHAPTER XXVII.

AN ETON BOY.

THE poor Bishop was sorely frightened lest he might have hastened his brother's death. He went with Stephen back to his cure amongst the colliers, and wrote to the Countess asking how the Earl was. The Countess had gained an advantage, and had no intention of losing it. After a long interval he got his letter returned to him, with a sheet of paper on which was written :—

“The Countess of Clara declines all further communication with the Lord Bishop of Ballinasloe, as she objects to having her servants bribed to disobey her orders in her own house, and most strongly condemns his Lordship for endangering the life of the Earl of Clara against the positive warning of the Countess, who acted under medical advice.”

This letter, which put the Bishop hopelessly in the wrong, was in one sense a relief : he evidently had not killed his brother, and his brother was not dying, or the fact would have probably been mentioned ; but would he be let die and be buried without any communication with the Bishop or Stephen ? How

were they to ascertain what went on at Blackberry Hall? No servant would dare to tell anything after the swift punishment inflicted on the Bishop's bribed accomplices. He did not know the name of the doctor who attended his brother; and, even if he did, the doctor would certainly act under instructions from the Countess.

The Bishop preached to the miners; he had a commanding presence, a good voice, and, though inferior to his nephew as a preacher, he was far above the average, and had attentive listeners. He belonged to a more formal age than Stephen; one which was then beginning to pass away; an age when the clergy, and particularly the higher clergy, were too sensitive of their own dignity, and over-rated the knowledge of their flocks, attributing to them the acceptance of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion, which many of them had never so much as heard of. The older class of clergy had not, in fact, enough of the missionary spirit at home which they exhibited in the colonies or abroad.

The Bishop returned to Ireland. Lord Kingscastle continued his good work. He wrote to the Countess, and implored her to send him news of his father, but, receiving no answer, and not, like his uncle, getting his letters even returned, he also gave up in despair any further attempt to keep in communication with Blackberry Hall.

About six months after the Bishop's and Lord Kingscastle's unsuccessful expedition to see the Earl, Lord Kingscastle received the following letter,

written very hastily in a schoolboy scrawl, from his half-brother Conrad :—

“ETON.

“DEAR STEPHEN,

“Just off home. The Governor dying. Will you meet me at the junction for Herneham, and we can go home together? He told me always to look to you as my father, when he was gone. Do not desert me. I feel very lonely, and will do whatever you tell me.

“Your affectionate brother,

“CONRAD.”

Stephen remarked the letter was directed in a different handwriting—evidently by one of the masters—to “The Reverend Lord Viscount Kingscastle.” Herneham was the railway station for Blackberry Hall, and, no doubt, he would get share of a carriage sent for his brother. There were few, if any, telegrams in those days, so he had to content himself by writing to his uncle to hurry over as fast as possible.

Stephen met his brother at the junction, and found him in boyish grief. The Earl had made a pet of this, his youngest son, who came so long after his other children. He was always an affectionate little fellow; and they had many talks together about Ireland and Stephen.

The boy had “Eton manners,” which accompany one of the best types of the Englishman; and though the Irish of all creeds, politics, and ranks feel they

have been bullied and—though it is a hard word, none other in the vocabulary expresses the idea—“robbed” by England, it is to be hoped that we, an intelligent people, can appreciate the many noble characteristics which distinguish the true English gentleman from the insolent charlatan, foisted on us from Dean Swift’s time to the present day.

The boy was a manly little fellow, and did not, from any false pride, try to conceal his grief; and his distress and feeling of desolation disposed him more than ever to cling to his elder brother, who had already a warm affection for him.

The Earl was still alive and conscious. It was apparent from the Bishop’s stolen visit he never had been as unable to understand worldly matters or to see his relations as his wife had announced.

The boy, begging Stephen to accompany him, went at once to the Earl’s room, and entered unexpectedly; the Countess was not there. The servants had all been changed since “the scene” of six months back; and no objection was raised.

Stephen’s heart was melted by the evident look of delight which he saw on his father’s—now, at all events, plainly dying—face. Conrad sobbed aloud; the Earl, in a weak, scarcely audible voice, said: “Come, both of you”; they went to the bedside, and he joined their hands together. “Stephen, take care of him; my last request. Conrad, do always what he tells you.” They both said earnestly, “I will.” Even the nurse and a valet present could not remain unmoved; and the tears streamed down the old man’s cheek. The Earl could say no more; and it

was evident he was too weak in body, if not in mind, to bear any real conversation with them. He, in a few minutes, began to doze away; and they left his room.

Stephen did not see the Countess that day; and only for a few minutes the next. The Earl did not die for several days; and the Bishop arrived just before the end, when he was actually unconscious. After his death, the Bishop wrote a letter to the Countess, and gave it to her maid to hand to her. It ran as follows :—

“DEAR SISTER-IN-LAW,

“I think it well to acquaint you that the Earls of Clara and their ancestors have been buried for two hundred years in the family vault at Glendalough, in the County of Wicklow. I suppose it will be your pleasure that my nephew, who is now head of the house, should make the necessary arrangements for the transport of my dear brother’s remains to Ireland, and his funeral there; perhaps, also, you might wish for a funeral service in the parish church here.

“Affectionately yours,

“FITZROY.”

The Countess replied by letter also:—“I have been left by my late husband’s will all his property; and he made me his sole executrix. I have been professionally advised that I alone am entitled to make preparations for his funeral; and I will bear

no interference from anyone. The funeral will be on the day after to-morrow; the service will be in this parish church; and the interment will be made in my family vault in the churchyard.

“GRISELDA CLARA.”

Neither the Bishop nor the new Earl of Clara could do any more. It was agreed between them that the letter should contain a statement recognising Stephen as “head of the house”; and they thought that would come better from his uncle than from himself, so the Bishop wrote the letter.

In the painful time which elapsed before the funeral, the Bishop and the new Earl saw nothing of the Countess, and seldom saw Conrad. Conrad, however, showed the greatest respect for his uncle; and, boy as he was, without intending anything more than respect and kindness, prevented a gross act of disrespect. He brought the Vicar of the parish, an elderly, nervous, hard-set-looking little man, to his uncle, and introduced him. The Vicar at once engaged the Bishop to perform the principal part of the funeral service. The church was in Blackberry Hall demesne. The Countess and her son walked after the bier, which was carried by the work-people; Stephen, alone, after them; the Bishop had gone beforehand to conduct the service.

The Countess, after the funeral, did not appear. Conrad saw his uncle and his brother off. Stephen said: “Conrad, I will never forget my father’s dying request, and my solemn promise to take care of you; but I do not wish to separate you from your mother,

even if I could ; you will write to me as usual, and you may always count on me."

The boy answered : " You are my head, Stephen, and I could not wish a better ; I will write to you."

Strange to say, George Corbet never appeared at the funeral ; his name was just mentioned between Stephen and his uncle. That he was not idle will appear in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE PORT-WINE SOLICITORS.

GEORGE CORBET had a rather stiff, constrained letter from the Countess, telling him his father was dying, and he would be expected at the Hall, and would meet his brother Conrad at Herneham. She did not care for him. Still, peculiar as she was, she felt that, for appearance' sake, it was better to have one of the elder branch present before the Earl's death, and afterwards at the funeral. She disliked him less than the Bishop or Stephen. She was perfectly indifferent as to who would succeed to the title and Kingscastle when her son could not. She would have wished the title for Conrad; but, careful as she was about money, she put no value on the Irish estates, because scarcely any income was derived from them. Though at heart a miser, she was a dull, stupid woman, and never clearly understood that, unless just at the famine period, the Irish estates yielded a very large return, which, however, went in paying interest on money borrowed on the Earl's life estate, and also in paying heavy premiums on policies of insurance, effected in his later years, to clear off the capital of the loans at his death.

George had consulted, long before his father's death, a sharp Dublin solicitor, to whom, however, he

told only what he chose of his case. He had by that time persuaded himself he was the elder brother, and he made no doubt of that to his solicitor, still warning him it might be contested by Stephen. He was advised that "possession was nine points of the law," and that he should make a strong effort to be first in occupation on his father's death. He then, on getting the Countess's letter, replied, effusively thanking her, but saying that his regiment was short-handed, and that he could not, until he actually heard the fatal news, ask for leave. He, however, at once got leave, "on urgent private affairs," started for Ireland, surprised the caretakers in Kingscastle, who did not dispute his right to stop there, and actually was in occupation at the time of his father's death.

He then asserted his authority : boldly paid off the caretaker and his wife with double wages ; installed Nancy Bradley as his housekeeper, and a nephew of hers, and one or two others he thought he could depend upon, as servants, in one capacity or another, but really as a garrison to hold the place.

He did not like leaving just then, and summoned his solicitor from Dublin ; and a circular was sent through the tenantry, asserting his title, and claiming the estates as heir to his father.

Meanwhile, the Bishop of Ballinasloe, hearing of George's rapid forestalling movements, summoned Stephen to Dublin. To the Bishop's horror, he found his nephew, the true heir, disposed to surrender without a struggle.

"Why, man," said his uncle, "give up your birth-right without even the excuse of a mess of pottage? It

would not be right—it would be a direct encouragement to fraud and dishonesty.”

Finally, he induced Stephen to leave the matter in the family solicitor's hands—the great resource of the aristocracy, as it saves them from all worry and responsibility.

This was not, however, Stephen's chief motive. He had secured the love of his life to be his promised wife; and he was deeply interested in his English ministry, and felt he was doing good. He had, so to speak, shaken off the Irish dust from his feet when he resigned his Dublin cure; and he hated the public scandal of a lawsuit with his twin-brother.

If George had taken possession of Kingscastle, the Bishop had secured the family solicitor, who knew all the family traditions, and kept all the musty deeds and archives in a fireproof safe, on which were emblazoned the arms and name of “The Earl of Clara.”

In Ireland these old family solicitors were a regular institution, which is now rapidly disappearing. They were often styled “port-wine solicitors,” as they gave their noble visitors a rare good glass of port when they called; they had often also purple noses from taking the rich beverage, though they rarely outraged social proprieties. They were very pompous and oracular, and yielded only in rank and knowledge to an aristocratic client; and, therefore, being themselves great, and bowing only to the princely suitor, they indirectly added a further height to the pinnacle on which he stood. They were (an odd bad boy excepted) a respectable,

solvent, reliable body. No doubt, they charged for their services ; still, their clients' interests were their own, and they did their work well, if rather slowly. It certainly was an advantage in a case to have one of these men as the conducting solicitor. The best counsel preferred his retainer ; the presiding judge liked to see him ; and the jurors were unconsciously influenced to consider that he must be on the right side when they saw him sitting beside his leader within the Bar, looking sure of his case, eminently respectable, richly dressed, and with a flower in his button-hole, got from his extensive greenhouses in his luxurious suburban residence.

The solicitors now engaged for Stephen were the firm which wrote the terrible letter to poor Malet. They believed as firmly in the Divine right of the house of Clara to their estates as any Jacobite of Queen Anne's reign believed in the same right to the Crown of England attaching to the house of Stuart. To be just to the firm of Wiseacre & Son, they had been approached by George, who showed them very plainly that their costs would be safe, but they would have nothing to do with him, as they had been told by the Bishop that Stephen was the heir ; and, without exactly knowing why, they had always recognised him as such, and, quite independently of their own gains, they were determined to support the claimant they thought had truth and justice on his side.

Now, the firm on the other side—Brown & Co.—were just as honourable men as Wiseacre & Son, just as clever, if not a little more so, and far more

energetic. Their retainers were accepted, and their business was well done, and they had secured quite as able a Bar ; still, Wiseacre's "brief" was more thought of in the Bar Library of the Dublin Four Courts than the plebeian Brown's. Old Mr. Wiseacre was often asked to dine with a judge ; old Mr. Brown never was ; and the fox-hunting special jurors throughout the country, who were Tories, had a prejudice in favour of the Tory Wiseacres and against the Whig Browns.

Mr. Wiseacre, the head of his firm, suggested a case for advice to be laid before Mr. Beaumont, Q.C., who advised an ejectment, which was accordingly brought and served. Mr. Wiseacre then arranged a consultation between Mr. Beaumont and Mr. Wayside, Q.C. (whom he had secured as second leader with other counsel), and the Bishop and Stephen. The consultation was to be held at Mr. Beaumont's residence in Merrion Square.

Mr. Wiseacre called for his two noble clients. He was beaming over with delight and self-complacency at the selection of his counsel.

"Now," said Mr. Wiseacre, rubbing his hands, smiling, and looking portentously wise and self-important, "the trial must take place at Wicklow at the Summer Assizes ; the Leinster Bar must be kept in good-humour, and their susceptibilities must not be ignored. It is true Beaumont is not on the circuit list now ; still, he was on it, and only left when made Solicitor-General. He is a Wicklow man, and will have great personal weight with the special jurors. He is the most sagacious of all the

leaders. I would have liked a regular member of the circuit," said Mr. Wiseacre thoughtfully, "as second string, and Beaumont wanted one and suggested a name; still, I thought Wayside would be the best for a reply for the real heir, against whom"—here Mr. Wiseacre waxed warm with sincere, not simulated, indignation—"an abominable plot has been hatched to oust him out of his just rights. Permit me, Earl of Clara," Mr. Wiseacre added, beaming with respectful admiration on Stephen, "to say that your Lordship is worthy of your noble lineage, and that all my feeble endeavours (an emphasis on 'feeble,' which was not genuine, as he thought them all-powerful) will be used to their utmost to preserve you in the position and property that Divine Providence has marked out for you."

The Bishop and Stephen of course said nothing could have been better managed so far than the case, and that, if they won, they would feel under eternal obligations to Mr. Wiseacre.

Mr. Beaumont had already known the Bishop—indeed they had sporting tastes in common—and was introduced to Stephen, who, to give Mr. Beaumont his due, he never forgot was Earl of Clara.

Mr. Wayside was there, exhilarated after a great speech he had just made in the House of Commons; which had evoked applause in that critical assembly from all shades of politicians.

Mr. Manly, Q.C., whom Mr. Beaumont had wanted to be his second in command, and a black-letter junior, of considerable repute, were also present.

Mr. Beaumont was a thorough man of business, as

well as a powerful, dexterous advocate, and an experienced lawyer. His great forte was sagacity. All the views of the case, on the facts and the law, were carefully sifted by able, thoroughly capable men, ardent for the cause of their client.

Mr. Beaumont in the end said, turning to Stephen : " I fear for your case ; there is no doubt your brother was well advised in taking possession ! I see the hand of Macnamara in that, who, I hear, is to lead against us. Mrs. Simpson being available is greatly in our favour, though Nancy Bradley will be a counterpoise. If Father O'Toole thought it his duty to give evidence, it would have great weight with the jury, who all know and respect him."

The Bishop, interposing: "It is a terrible calamity the loss of his diary."

Mr. Beaumont, smiling: "Of course if we had it, we would tender it; but Macnamara would fight its reception for all he knows. Father O'Toole certainly went out of his way to insert statements in it."

Mr. Ryall, the junior, speaking for the first time in the consultation: "Mr. Beaumont, I think there is an authority in favour of admitting the whole of the diary."

Mr. Beaumont was a kindly man and never snubbed juniors, and, looking benevolently on Mr. Ryall, said: "I will look into your authority with pleasure, Ryall; I see your careful hand all through this case."

Mr. Wayside's face was a study, whilst Mr. Beaumont was, as it were, throwing buckets of cold water over their chances of success. He now broke

forth : " If there is justice and fair play in that part of the world known as the County of Wicklow, if we get a special jury of ordinary intelligence and honesty, we must convince them there is a foul conspiracy to oust a nobleman, an eloquent preacher, a man of chivalrous honesty, from his rank and his estates. Good God ! when I think of that beautiful girl who is now to be his wife, whom he rescued from the grave, we would not be men if we did not fight his just cause. If we can only get Angelica Molloy to come forward—she is not in the conspiracy—to tell what she must know, we are as certain as that the sky is above us to get the jury, under the guidance of a competent judge, to find for us."

Wayside fell back, rubbing his nose in his inimitable manner, exhausted by his emotions.

After a pause, Beaumont said quietly : " Friend Wayside, I do not know whether you have heard the rumour in the library this evening—I was there late—that Murnahan is going the Leinster Circuit, and will, as the Chief Justice of Ireland goes with him, try this case in Wicklow. All I can say is, if Murnahan and you, and a couple of good-looking girls, get together in the court-house—that is, with him on the Bench, the ladies in the witness-box, and you at the Bar addressing the jury—you will get the verdict right enough between you. But there was another rumour in the library," said Beaumont, with admirably affected gravity, " that the price of parchment was likely to go up, Macnamara will require so much of it for his exceptions to the proceedings; we must

win, if at all, on grounds that will hold water. I saw Miss Malet in Imogen and Ophelia; and no one admires more than I do her beauty, accomplishments, and virtues; still, what has that exactly to do with which of two brothers is the elder?"

Stephen here said: "I would sooner lose the case than that either my affianced bride or Miss Angelica Molloy should be exposed to cross-examination in a public Court."

Wayside's face was a picture of scorn and indignation during Mr. Beaumont's withering remarks, but relaxed during poor Stephen's unworldly and generous interposition. He turned round, and, tapping Stephen lightly on the shoulder, said: "You are a man, my Lord, the House of Peers cannot spare; you are a nineteenth-century remnant of the old mediævalism, which made the saintly warrior a priestly knight. The Crusades created chivalry, and saved the world from the brutal barbarism of the dark ages. I" (with an emphasis on "I," and ignoring Beaumont) "will have you in Kingscastle yet. I say that our client's conduct to Miss Malet is relevant to his case. Is it conceivable that our noble-hearted client would sully his fair name by putting forward a case which he was not sure was true? On the other hand, does not his brother's case bear on it in large letters the words, 'the lying fabrication of a blackguard and a swindler'?"

"Wayside, I do not like interrupting you," interposed Mr. Beaumont; "but I have a special invitation to dine at the Castle this evening, and have no time to lose; we must meet again, and, Mr. Wiseacre, we

must have Father O'Toole and Miss Angelica Molloy, if possible, as witnesses; though I am more than doubtful as to the admissibility of those very portions of their evidence we are most anxious to bring before the jury. However, it will not be my fault if I do not play upon Murnahan's feelings."

"Well, Mr. Wiseacre," said the Bishop anxiously, as they walked away from the consultation, "what do you think of our chances?"

"Hope for the best, but prepare for the worst, my Lord; you may rely on me doing my utmost," was the cautiously self-glorifying reply of a very worthy man and excellent solicitor.

Mr. Ryall, the junior, who was walking with them, flourishing his pocket-handkerchief, with a knowing, confidential nod to Stephen, really answered the Bishop's question, saying: "We are doing right well; Beaumont will keep the yacht on the right course, and avoid rocks and shoals; and then Wayside will put on every inch of canvas and win the regatta. Beaumont is mad-jealous Wayside is in the House, and he is not."

Thus spoke the junior, who deserved all the credit of getting up the case, facts and law, which Mr. Wiseacre complacently appropriated, without acknowledgment.

CHAPTER XXIX.

MR. MACNAMARA, Q.C., AT CONSULTATION.

ANGELICA heard of Stephen's engagement, and was not surprised. She never thought of him or anyone as a lover. She had determined to devote herself to religion. Unfortunately, the taunts of George and her mother had forced her to examine her heart, and she found she could never love George, and she did love his brother. She knew instinctively Stephen did not love her, and she never contemplated marrying him. When George, in his rage and passion on the Upper Lake of Glendalough, disclosed his base schemes against Stephen, the projects were so frightful the pure, right-minded girl could not understand them. She, however, was clever and observant; and once her suspicions were aroused by the marked difference made by the Marchesa in her treatment of Stephen and George, and her conversations with the Bishop of Ballinasloe and Father O'Toole, she saw many things which showed her some underhand plot was being contrived.

Nancy Bradley did not conceal her indignation at being turned away by Father O'Toole, and had frequent mysterious meetings with the Marchesa; and the state of health of the old Earl of Clara was anxiously watched.

What the Count thought Angelica did not know. He was in failing health, and was devoted to Angelica; but lately there seemed an estrangement between her father and mother. The Count never concealed his preference for Stephen over George.

Angelica one day was passing the door of her mother's boudoir when she saw her putting a book on the fire. It struck her it looked like one of Father O'Toole's diaries, and, seeing the Marchesa leave the room, she went in and took it off. She easily extinguished the flames, as the book was only being slowly consumed, and put it in her pocket, and, hastening to her own room, she found her fears were only too true—it was one of Father O'Toole's diaries, and the very one he had missed. The outside binding was consumed, and some of the leaves.

Angelica, as soon as she could do it, without being noticed, went to Father O'Toole, who was glad to get back his book, but horrified at the attempt to destroy it. Evidently the Marchesa had had it for a considerable time, and had got it through Nancy Bradley stealing it. But until that very moment, when Angelica was accidentally passing the door, she had not made up her mind to destroy it.

Father O'Toole put it carefully up, and they agreed to say nothing about it.

"Angelica," said the old man, "you must not hesitate to do your duty, no matter how unpleasant it may be. You will have to be prepared, if necessary, to be examined at this trial. Right must be done. The very fact that your unfortunate mother has entered into this wanton conspiracy under some

delusion that she may assist her Church, makes it the more imperative on all good Catholics to defeat her designs. She would not only defraud a good man of his name and inheritance for the sake of his unworthy brother, but disgrace the Catholic religion by giving scoffers the opportunity of saying we snapped up converts' titles and estates by such base means to aggrandise our holy Church."

The good old man got excited, and was moved. He dearly loved Angelica and her father. He was much attached to the Clara family, from whom he had always received great kindness; above all, he hated anything mean and dishonest, and was sensitive for the honour of his beloved Church.

George Corbet rarely left Kingscastle, fearing, apparently, some effort might be made by his brother to oust him. Still, to Father O'Toole's disgust, he ostentatiously attended Mass. Angelica, however, as far as possible avoided him; and, as the Count treated him coldly, he rarely visited at the Château Dijon.

The feeling of the neighbourhood was quite against George, and his attempts to play the convert pleased no one except the Marchesa. Unfortunately, in Ireland, people who have changed their faith have in most cases done so for filthy lucre's sake; and the Irish peasant is as suspicious of one who turns his coat to become a Catholic as of one who does it to turn Protestant.

It was well known Father O'Toole was against George. The disappearance of the book—an occurrence talked of far and wide—made people shake

their heads ; and, cautiously as she might manage it, Nancy Bradley's confidences with the Marchesa became known.

George looked pale and anxious, and it was whispered he was drinking hard. Burns's well-known lines—

“ Wha hae nae check but human law
Are to a few restricked ”—

are happily true ; and certainly George was not one of the exceptions to the rule, for his conscience, though it was not strong enough to make him abandon his villainy, did not leave him an easy moment. The Marchesa contrived to believe she was advancing her Church by her misdeeds. George had no such escape : he saw he was wilfully defrauding his own brother of his birth-right. If Angelica was the one woman he loved, Stephen was the one man he respected. Bad as he was, he never would have entered into this foul conspiracy merely to be Earl of Clara and owner of the estates : he did it to win Angelica ; and now that he was hopelessly pledged to his unrighteous cause, he saw Angelica was for ever lost to him. He saw her shrink from him as one polluted and unclean, and his guilty conscience cowed his natural daring. He rarely addressed the girl. The Marchesa and he had settled their plans, and there was nothing for them to meet about. The trial became the talk of the country. Great precautions were taken about the jury, which it was settled should be struck so as to make it, as far as possible, fair and impartial. George knew, however, that no ingenuity could

manage to make him popular, and that the jury, if they could, would find for his brother. It even occurred to him to give in; but he saw such a course would only be proclaiming his own baseness.

Nancy Bradley had become his cook and house-keeper at Kingscastle. She was faithful to her foster-son, and in some extraordinary way had almost got herself to believe her story was true. She during this time exercised an immense influence over George. She was the only person with whom he could discuss the question which was always present to his mind.

"Master George," said she, "do not trouble yourself. You cannot remember when you were born; I can."

"But Nancy," said the wretched man, "I know my poor mother knew Stephen was the elder."

"How could she tell?" Nancy would answer triumphantly; "and your father was not in the room. I thought," said she, using an argument which she knew would influence him, "Master George, my own boy, that you were afraid of nothing. Leave it to me; leave it to me."

Such is a sample of the talk that went on between this curiously assorted pair up to the eve of the Assizes.

George was summoned up to Dublin to attend a consultation at his leader's (Mr. Macnamara's) house.

Success at the Irish Bar is on the whole by merit; and the solicitors, it must be allowed, choose the best men. Mr. Macnamara, Q.C., was fully equal to a forensic duel with Mr. Beaumont; he was probably

the greatest master of the law of evidence at the Bar of his day; and he was a subtle and dangerous cross-examiner. He was a member of the Home Circuit; and there was some little grumbling amongst the Leinster men at a Home man being brought to lead them. He had as his second a very rising young man, Mr. Headstrong, and as a junior a still younger man. Both of these were Leinster Circuit men; and the judgment of George's solicitor was fully shown in each of them afterwards successively being not only leader of his Circuit, but amongst the very foremost men of the entire Irish Bar. Mr. Macnamara was splendidly up in his case; and George saw at once he was in first-rate hands. No men are really more afraid of each other secretly than lawyers, though in the arena they show a bold front. Macnamara dwelt more on the weak points of his case than on his strong points; and he intimated freely he did not think they had a good case.

Headstrong was more hopeful, and referred to some authorities which were chiefly supplied to him by his junior, which he openly acknowledged.

"I am very thankful to you, Charlie;" or, "That's just what we want, Charlie"—being said in a voice showing warm friendship, and a generous spirit appreciative of the singularly great merit of his able junior. As the consultation broke up, the junior, evidently acting on a hint from the solicitor, asked Mr. Macnamara would it be requisite to have a consultation in Wicklow on the eve of the Assizes.

"My very young friend," said Mr. Macnamara, "I consider it most essential. If we had no regular consultation, we would have, what I am always opposed to, an informal one, where nothing satisfactory can be arranged; besides"—bowing to the solicitor—"I am always averse to depriving any professional gentleman of his proper remuneration."

CHAPTER XXX.

THE CAT TOBIAS.

IT is a melancholy sight to see an old man left alone in the world, just at the time when friends are most needed to step in for a chat, and cheer him up. But so it usually is: when the friends of youth drop off, there is rarely anyone to take their place; no one who can discuss old events, and be in sympathy with a man who has outlived his contemporaries. A time comes when failing eyesight, failing strength, failing interest in the topics of the day, make reading a trouble; and many a formerly active man sits listlessly in his chair, or lies languidly in bed, waiting for his inevitable call.

Father O'Toole sat alone in his study—a pathetic figure, looking aged and worried—with no companion but a large brindled cat, who sat beside him, perched on the arm of his chair, and purring lustily; whilst his master stroked his back and scratched his head.

Father O'Toole did not believe in the genuine affection of his dumb friend; he used to say in Tobias gratitude was a sense of favours to come, and that he rarely visited him except just before meal hours.

His housekeeper announced a visitor. He did not, however, catch the name, as he was getting deaf;

and he had not got accustomed to the voice of the woman who had succeeded Nancy Bradley.

The visitor, when he entered, turned out to be Ambrose Malet. Father O'Toole rose up, and wrung his hand warmly, exclaiming: "Dear old friend, I am right glad to see you!"

Welcome shone in his face, and Malet, a tender-hearted man himself, looked almost overcome, and with difficulty got out in a faltering voice: "It is some amends for being a prodigal, getting such a greeting on returning home."

"Now, Amby, Tobias and I were just going to lunch, and you must join us and break your fast before you tell your news."

Malet complied. He had not gone to the consultation, and instead had come down from Dublin to take a look round; he and the good old priest soon got on the all-absorbing topic of the trial, and they talked and re-talked it over and over again.

"I think," said Father O'Toole, "it is over-delicacy on Stephen's part not coming to me now; nor has the Bishop come. They know my opinions; still there is information I have recently obtained which will be of great use, which I would have written about, but waited to see if either of them would call. I can tell you now. Angelica brought me back my diary, which she saw her mother trying to burn; the Marchesa does not know her daughter rescued it, and thinks it is burned, and I only tell you this confidentially, for the benefit of Stephen, and for the use of his case; but it is better not to have the matter generally known. Angelica can prove

saving the book, and also that George threatened to ruin his brother for crossing him in her affections. Of course the poor girl does not wish to be examined, and will only come forward if her evidence is absolutely necessary. I also will, if required, be a witness. The one person, Amby, whom I love best in the world is that dear girl. Her wretched mother has spoiled the happiness and sullied the honour of her whole family. Angel and I are prepared to do our utmost to repair the mischief her mother and George Corbet have done."

In the end, Father O'Toole persuaded Malet to stop a couple of days, and, at his host's suggestion, cautiously approached his successor about selling his interest in his old home and the farm which always went with it.

The tenant had really scarcely any interest to sell, being merely a yearly tenant. He had, however, without any security, laid out a considerable sum of money in repairing the house and improving the land.

Malet found him only too ready to come to terms; but no bargain was finally made until the result of the trial was determined, as if it went adverse to Stephen, he would not think of making such a purchase.

He did not like calling at Château Dijon, though he knew the Count would welcome him, as his host, Father O'Toole, had almost given up calling, owing to the marked coolness of the Marchesa towards him; and it would have been still more awkward for Malet, whose daughter's engagement was well known.

Malet found both the Orange and Freemason Lodges had disappeared in his absence, and the woollen manufactory which had been started was doing badly. When he returned from the County Wicklow, he called in Dublin on Dr. Greene, preferring to go alone, and without Stephen.

The doctor wondered what complaint his healthy, sunburnt visitor was suffering from, but gave him a warm greeting when he knew who he was.

"I have, doctor, to give the heartfelt thanks of the father of an only child for saving her life. She told me you would take no fee from her."

Here the doctor waved his hand, as if not wishing to discuss the question. Malet continued: "I would not insult you by offering now to repay you; please, however, accept this present, not for its value, but, as a token of regard and gratitude." He then produced a magnificent watch and chain, the watch having inside the inscription, "A token of gratitude from A. Malet to H. C. Greene, M.D., for saving the life of his daughter Gertrude."

"Indeed, I will take it with pleasure, Malet, and always be proud of it. You see I have a very old watch and chain."

"So Gertrude told me, and therefore I ventured to give them."

The information which Malet brought about the book, and Father O'Toole's and Angelica's evidence, were all considered so important that Mr. Wiseacre and his head clerk went and saw Father O'Toole, who told them in detail what evidence he could give, and also that Angelica would surely attend the trial, and not refuse to be examined.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE LEINSTER BAR.

THE County of Wicklow was in a ferment over the expected ejectment between (all legal fictions apart) the brothers Stephen and George Corbet. The house of Clara was one of the foremost in the land: virtually far larger issues were involved than the mere ownership of the estates. It was rumoured about that a religious aspect might arise in the case, which, though often wholly irrelevant, is, if possible, dragged into legal proceedings in Ireland. Many people shook their heads, and knowingly winked at each other, wondering where George Corbet, who had been warned off race-courses, and had his horses mortgaged for more than their value, was getting the money to carry on his suit. He had engaged the best counsel that could be had, and, wherever the money was to be found, they must be paid; and Mr. Macnamara, it was reported, was getting higher fees than Mr. Beaumont, his rival leader. Did the Count Dijon, or did the Marchesa, who had a large independent fortune of her own, supply the funds for the litigation? If not, where else did they come from? George, on his own credit, would not get bit, bite, or sup from Bray to Arklow. If the Marchesa gave the money, all were agreed she would get value for

it, either in meal or in malt ; and how would she get it except by marrying Miss Angel to George ?

Now, *vox populi vox Dei* is never wrong. No one liked the Marchesa, who was haughty, mean, and hard ; and everyone loved Angel ; and indignation against the Marchesa rose to a violent tempest at the idea of marrying the loveliest and sweetest maid in the whole country to a broken-down roué, even if, by fraud and trickery, he did become owner of the Clara estates, and get the title. Malet had not been sitting half-an-hour with Father O'Toole when the fact was known and commented on in Rathdrum ; and after his visit, of a couple of days, to the priest it was circulated everywhere that Father O'Toole would be a witness against George.

No one, Catholic or Protestant, doubted Father O'Toole's honour ; but, at the same time, it was thought highly improbable that he would take any active part against George if he were the accepted lover of Angelica Molloy ; so it was supposed there could be no likelihood of a match between George and Angelica ; and, that being so, what then did the Marchesa mean ? or was it a syndicate of Jewish bill-discounters was backing George ? The more the point was debated the thicker the mystery became, and the tension greater. The quiet little seaside town of Wicklow became crowded on the day before the trial ; not a bed was to be had by a late comer for love or money.

Practically the entire Leinster Circuit Bar came down from Dublin. A large number of them were engaged one way or another in the great case, and

all were anxious to see the gladiatorial combats sure to be fought out between the counsel. The law of evidence might be settled on knotty points. It was even whispered Angel Molloy certainly, and possibly Stephen's *fiancée*, might be examined and cross-examined. Father O'Toole would be in the witness-box; and the amount of villainy which George Corbet had managed to squeeze into a few short years would be minutely criticised by way of damaging his credit.

The Bar, however, forms a very small part of the crowds which a great trial attracts. Each of the opposing solicitors had taken an entire house for their army of clerks and runners. The witnesses had all to be accommodated. Angelica was under the care of Father O'Toole, and not with her mother. The Count did not attend the Assizes.

When the excitement had reached fever-heat, a blowing of horns was heard, and a private coach and four horses dashed up the town, carrying Mr. Macnamara, Q.C., Mr. Headstrong, and their junior. There were bets amongst the junior members of the Bar as to whether or not Mr. Macnamara would drive down from Dublin in full forensic costume. But he did not; still there he was, smiling and gracious, and bowing acknowledgments to all and sundry, resplendent in his summer white hat and blue cravat, with his faithful valet and attendant, Mooney, on the box-seat. They had scarcely arrived and partaken of a slight refreshment when they retired to the inevitable consultation. This could be clearly seen from the street, though, o

course, what transpired could not be even guessed at.

The next arrival was Mr. Beaumont, who had been spending the day with an aristocratic friend of his in the neighbourhood.

Mr. Wayside arrived still later.

No pleasanter place could be got for a Summer Assizes or a seaside resort than Wicklow. The town is picturesquely situated ; the ozone is welcomed by the Bar, accustomed to stuffy courts, and eager to get out of Dublin, for at that period Wicklow was the first town on the Leinster Circuit. A morning dip in the sea was most refreshing, and a stroll on the delightful Murrow enchanting. It would be difficult to get an ugly stretch of country in the whole of the cheerful County Wicklow, popularly called "The Garden of Ireland." Perhaps the coast-line between the end of the Murrow and Greystones is the least agreeable prospect which could be pointed out ; but even here there is a weird, Tennysonian, *Locksley Hall* aspect about the dreary moorland and the barren shore which is not without an attraction of its own, on the most interesting railway in Ireland. At the time we are writing of there was no railway, and the coach road ran much farther in through a beautiful country, and it was then necessary for all persons coming from any distance to arrive in the town of Wicklow the evening before the Assizes commenced.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE WICKLOW ASSIZES.

THE morning of the trial opened bright and fresh, and the court was crowded. As Mr. Beaumont had announced at his consultation, Lord Chief Justice Murnahan was the presiding judge. His knowledge of law was unquestioned, and his anxiety to do what was right, irrespective of class or creed, freely acknowledged ; still, there was a general feeling that if two attractive young women like Angel and Gertrude gave evidence on Stephen's side, it would affect him, as appealing to his romantic Celtic nature, which would favour the weaker sex, and dispose him to think two pure, spotless girls like them would discern which was the worthier of the two brothers, and which would be the less likely man to put forward a fraudulent case. It was also thought that Chief Justice Murnahan, being a Catholic, would probably have heard more of Father O'Toole's good sense and honesty of purpose than a Protestant might.

As he sat on the Bench, he looked the very embodiment of intellectual power. He had a massive head, with a leonine face, and a thick crop of shaggy hair always escaping from under his wig. A good-natured, kindly man, who, if he hastily said

a sharp word which wounded a young barrister, was always sorry for it, and tried to make amends by helping on the man he might have unwittingly discouraged. He was a genuine Irishman, racy of the soil, and one of whom his country might be justly proud.

The court was densely packed by an eager, anxious crowd.

The composition of the jury was keenly criticised for the purpose of ascertaining how their inclinations would probably lean. They were about half Catholic and half Protestant; and it was supposed, on the religious aspect, which was sure some way to turn up, they would be in favour of Stephen. In the first place, the foreman was an Orangeman, who, it was said, had declared he would "eat his boots or die of starvation" before he found for a turncoat, as he contemptuously styled George, whose attendance at the Roman Catholic church had become well known. There were several Protestant shopkeepers who would likely follow his lead. Even the strong Roman Catholic farmers on the jury, it was thought, would look suspiciously on George's conversion if Father O'Toole was a witness against him.

The only two men who would probably be in George's favour were, indeed, two Protestants: one a sporting squireen, who made up to George, as belonging to a higher social grade; and another man, on the borders of Kildare, who kept a racing stable, and to whom it was said George owed money.

Finally, there were a couple of doubtful men on the jury, who might go either way.

It is not our intention to inflict any lengthened history of this famous trial on our readers. Mr. Beaumont's opening statement, which occupied a day and a half of broiling July weather, was exhaustive in every sense of the word, and seriously was considered an admirable specimen of his adroit advocacy, suiting himself to the likely tendencies of the Chief Justice, the sympathies of the jury, and the very peculiar and delicate nature of the testimony to be given.

It was hinted at the same time that Mr. Beaumont, relying on his great position, and playing on the feelings of the tender-hearted judge, opened views of his case which were plainly irrelevant to the issues to be tried, and which those who were in the secrets of his consultations knew he thought were not admissible.

He, after finishing his address, sat down, having convinced everyone that if a very small part of what he stated could be proved, Stephen ought, at all events, to win on the merits, if not on the law.

"The rules of the game," as they are called, were played on far stricter lines then than now; and once the examination of witnesses commenced, a great deal of time was occupied in able arguments on the admissibility of evidence.

This was Mr. Macnamara's strong point; and the Leinster Bar were delighted at the manner in which Mr. Beaumont, a former leader of their Circuit, showed he was fully equal to his rival, then the acknowledged leader of the Home Circuit.

A very young member of the Leinster Bar in the

Counsel's room incautiously blurted out, after an artful objection of Macnamara's, which the Chief Justice decided in his favour: "What a pity the Home Bar has got him!" but he never repeated the observation, as he was literally howled down by all the members present; and he slunk away to smoke on the Murrow, and did not show himself again until the Bar dinner, when he was the subject of some very scathing remarks, Macnamara not being there as a guest, having been invited to dine with the judges.

The real adroitness of Mr. Beaumont did not appear until the third day of the trial, when Mrs. Simpson was examined. Her presence in Ireland up to the time of the trial had been carefully concealed from the public, and, of course, from the opposite side, who thought she was still in Australia; and Mr. Beaumont intended to deal strongly with it in his opening statement, and spring a surprise-mine on his adversaries, when, just as he rose to make his speech, a letter was put into his hand to the effect it was feared she was too ill to leave Dublin.

He had then to speak with the consciousness that possibly his most important witness would be absent; in fact, he had a consultation, on the evening of the first day, whether or not they would apply for a postponement.

She did, however, appear as a witness, looking very faint, and speaking in a low voice. Her evidence was quite clear. She proved to being present at the birth of the twins—of Stephen being the first-born, and of observing the mark on his arm; also, she

swore positively Nancy Bradley was not in the room until after Stephen and George were both born.

To the delight of the Bar, Mr. Headstrong rose to cross-examine her. Even thus early in his career he had become famous as a cross-examiner. If he could break down Mrs. Simpson's evidence, his side was bound to win.

He really did not shake her evidence materially; still, when he sat down, he left the general impression that some way he had seriously damaged the value of it, though no one could exactly tell in what particular.

Father O'Toole was examined, and there was a sensation in Court when the half-burnt note-book was produced. We will not enter into the desperate struggle that ensued as to the admissibility of the evidence concerning the loss, recovery, and contents of this book. Are they not all contained in a report of the trial carefully prepared by a member of the Bar, whose skill as a reporter was celebrated, and who was affectionately addressed by his brethren as "Harry"?

Suffice it to say, all the material facts which Father O'Toole was examined to prove were at length got out, to the utter disgust and indignation of Mr. Macnamara, who talked of retiring from the case, but, of course, did not do so.

George Corbet, it was remarked, looked ill and depressed from the commencement of the trial, and sat with his face buried in his hands. He started up with an excited air when Father O'Toole was

describing how Angelica brought back the book, which Mr. Beaumont had purposely glossed over, so as to bring it out with more startling effect through the witness. George, as if he could not bear to listen to the evidence any longer, here got up and staggered out of court.

Mr. Headstrong, of course, was too experienced an advocate to make the mistake of attempting to cast any slur on Father O'Toole; and he was extremely polite to him when he rose to cross-examine him, and only asked him a very few questions.

Mr. Beaumont said Miss Angelica Molloy would be the next witness; and as her evidence would take a considerable time, and as it was then late, he would suggest adjourning to an early hour the next morning.

Mr. Macnamara rose, and said he was completely at a loss to see what material evidence this young lady could give. He was informed she was very beautiful and very charming, and might adorn the case, and certainly gain the sympathies (glancing round) of his young friends of the Junior Bar.

Chief Justice Murnahan, mopping his face and looking very tired, said rather gruffly it was better to adjourn for the day.

The trial was resumed the next morning at a far earlier hour than would now be fixed.

George Corbet was again there, looking dreadfully ill and haggard.

The excitement instead of lessening increased, and the court was fuller than ever when Angelica entered the witness-box. She was simply but elegantly

dressed, and, though pale and dejected, looked composed, as if she had made up her mind to go through what she knew would be a dreadful ordeal.

Both sides foresaw that, on the all-important question of blackening the characters of George and the Marchesa, her evidence was of vital importance ; and inch by inch every word of her direct evidence was bitterly fought out.

Mr. Macnamara ostentatiously instructed his junior to take full notes, with a view to ulterior proceedings, of the objections tendered by him to the reception of evidence ; and if he had threatened to retire from the case during Father O'Toole's evidence once, he did it half a dozen times during Angelica's. He characterized Chief Justice Murnahan's decisions, in audible asides, as travesties of justice, and certainly displayed conspicuously all his great powers, as the best man of his day on the law of evidence.

His efforts were practically of no avail, so far at least as the trial went, whatever their effect might be in after proceedings. Whether rightly or wrongly, Angelica was allowed to tell the story of the proposal to her on the Lake at Glendalough, and the vengeance then threatened by George on Stephen, whom he thought his successful rival ; and the rescuing of Father O'Toole's book.

Mr. Macnamara vainly attempted, as a last effort, to have this evidence, or the greater part of it, postponed for, if necessary, a rebutting case ; he being resolved in that event to shut it out altogether.

Chief Justice Murnahan's soft heart went out completely to Angelica ; he interfered to give her

time to compose herself, and once or twice suggested adjournments, when she looked agitated and overcome.

Mr. Macnamara at length rose for the cross-examination. His conduct in this part of the case was severely criticised.

So far as the trial went, her evidence had been, once it was admitted as legal, damning to the characters of the Marchesa and George ; and, of course, the only possible way of minimising its effect was to show that she had a strong bias in favour of Stephen and against George, and to expose her alleged duplicity in luring on George to his destruction, by pretending to favour his suit, after the scene on the Lake. Mr. Macnamara had a desperate case, on the merits, to meet ; and he had (in addition to his strong legal points) to try desperate remedies to show unworthy motives on Angelica's part in her conduct to George, who, whatever else he was, must be admitted to have been her devoted lover and admirer.

If the parties had been ordinary, commonplace people, and, above all, Angelica a flirting, giddy girl, the course Mr. Macnamara took might have succeeded ; and those who criticised his conduct most could not have shown any other or better line for him to have taken ; and once he took it, he maintained it with extraordinary ability and courage.

We will not attempt to give more than a few bald extracts from his cross-examination ; and even those are deprived of the introductory preparatory statements to his questions and running comments on

the unfortunate girl's answers, in all of which he was completely unrivalled at the Bar.

Mr. Beaumont adopted an equally strong course, which came in for almost more comment at the time, but was loudly praised afterwards, because it succeeded.

He had fought determinately, and, on the whole, won, in getting in the material parts of Father O'Toole's and Angelica's evidence on their direct examinations.

He had not occasion to interfere with Father O'Toole's evidence on his cross-examination. He adopted the same course of non-interference with regard to Angelica, apparently behaving with brutal indifference when the gentle girl was being cruelly tortured by Mr. Macnamara.

Mr. Beaumont prudently concluded that any attempt by him to shield her would suggest a fear that she was being rightly heckled, and if she were left alone, the sympathy of the Chief Justice and jury would be with her. He relied on her noble character being well known, and guessed that the Chief Justice and jury would attribute conscientious motives alone to her conduct throughout the whole matter.

Mr. Macnamara began his cross-examination by saying to Angelica, in a mocking tone : " May I ask, Miss Molloy, is it your habit to publish accounts of the proposals of your suitors ? "

Poor Angelica said : " No ; in this case I had reasons." And, in reply to what her reasons were, said : " Because it was necessary to prevent wrong being done."

Mr. Macnamara then asked solemnly : " Did this man, whom you have denounced as a villain for his language and manners in the boat, afterwards act as your escort in the hunting-field, and accompany you to church ?" Of course, she had to say " Yes."

Mr. Macnamara's skill was seen in its highest perfection in ridiculing her explanation of such extraordinary conduct. And, in the end, her explanation, or, as Mr. Macnamara called it, " lame excuse," was given in a stumbling, confused manner, to the effect she did not at the time comprehend the meaning of George's threats against Stephen.

Mr. Macnamara then asked her sarcastically : " Did you ever love George ?"

Before Angelica could answer, Chief Justice Murnahan interposed. He had been manifestly as unhappy as Angelica during the cross-examination. He shifted his wig ; he fidgeted on the Bench ; and he looked imploringly at Mr. Beaumont, who at first ignored his appeals, and finally shook his head, as much as to say he would not interfere. The Chief Justice then, when the question was put, " Did you ever love George ?" could contain his feelings no longer, and, with the lisp he spoke with when greatly moved, said : " Mr. Macnamara, may I ask you, do you think it is for the interest of your case to put these questions to any respectable young woman ?"

Mr. Macnamara rose slowly, removed his spectacles, holding them in his gloved hand, and said calmly : " My Lord, I would, if possible, yield to your Lordship's wishes ; but I have a duty to my client

I am bound to discharge. I am instructed that this young girl, innocent and interesting as she may appear to your Lordship, has been playing a double part, and that unless I am allowed to use my discretion and pursue my cross-examination, disagreeable as it may be, my client's case cannot be done justice to."

"Go on, go on, Mr. Macnamara," said the Chief Justice, evidently much annoyed, and throwing himself back in his chair.

"Now, Miss Molloy," said Mr. Macnamara, "I have to ask you for a reply to my question, painful though it may be to me to put it, and to you to answer it. Did you ever love George?"

"No," she replied.

"So I thought," he added. He next said, with an air of severe politeness: "Now, my young lady, I must ask you a further question. Did you ever love Stephen?"

The poor girl turned deadly pale, and everyone expected she was going to faint; but, recovering herself with a great effort, she replied, amidst perfect silence, so that a pin might have been heard fall: "Yes." And then the following questions were put and answered:—

"Did he ever ask you to marry him?"

"No."

"If he had asked you, would you have consented?"

"Yes."

"Did you expect him to ask you?"

"No."

"And why, may I ask you, Miss Angel Molloy,

did you not expect him to ask you—you, a beautiful young woman, who admit you already loved him?"

"Because," said the unhappy girl, reddening now, in contrast to her previously death-like pallor, with shame and mortification at the humiliation she was undergoing, and never looking more lovely and appealing straight to the heart of everyone on the jury—the Chief Justice had long since been vanquished—"he did not love me; he never loved me."

The eyes of all in the Court had been fastened on Angelica, and no one had observed the restless, wild look which had come into George Corbet's eyes.

Angelica had scarcely finished saying the last few words, and before Mr. Macnamara could make a comment on them or ask another biting question, George sprang up, as if maddened with passion, and glaring at Mr. Macnamara, and, shaking his fist at him, exclaimed in a hoarse voice: "Stop! stop! I command you, or you will kill her!"

These words were followed by an unearthly scream. Everyone, of course, turned and looked at George; and all were horrified at the awful spectacle of the unfortunate man falling down, foaming, and working in a fit of epilepsy.

He lay on the floor of the court a dreadful sight, with a stream of blood flowing from a cruel wound which was caused by his head, in his fall, coming with great violence against an iron bar in the courthouse near which he had been sitting.

Mr. Macnamara, after whispering with his colleagues, arose and asked the Chief Justice to allow a

short respite, owing to the distressing event which had occurred.

The Chief Justice adjourned the great case to the next morning, proposing, in the meantime, to take some civil bill appeals, which were standing over, and which might occupy the rest of the afternoon; and the courthouse rapidly emptied.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A DEATH-BED REPENTANCE.

ON the reassembling of the Court the next morning, Mr. Macnamara rose in his place and said, in his most impressive manner, that, owing to a letter he had received from Mr. George Corbet, his client, he was prepared to submit to a verdict against him; and, consequently, his Lordship and the jury would be no longer troubled with the case.

This announcement was received in profound silence. Mr. Macnamara then said he had shown Mr. George Corbet's letter to his learned friend, Mr. Beaumont, who agreed with him there was not only no objection to reading it in public before the verdict was entered, but, on the contrary, it was highly desirable to do so; and Mr. Macnamara, bowing low, craved his Lordship's permission to read the letter. The Judge bowed assent; and Mr. Macnamara read as follows:—

“WICKLOW ASSIZES.

“DEAR MR. MACNAMARA,

“Having heard the evidence given yesterday, I wish to withdraw all opposition to my brother's case.

“I feel now, when it is too late, I was wrong ever to contend for the title and inheritance with him.

"I believe he is my elder brother.

"I know he has a large heart and forgiving spirit ; and I ask his pardon for all the injury I have done him.

"I am too weak to write, and have dictated this letter, and intend to sign it with my own hand.

"Thanking you and my other counsel for the able conduct of my case,

"Believe me, truly yours,

"GEORGE CORBET."

The verdict was then formally entered, the lawyers gathered up their papers, and the court emptied, Mr. Macnamara's last words being, in an aside : "Mooney, have my carriage ready when my lunch is over."

The collapse of a most sensational case was a great relief to all concerned in it, except the Marchesa; but a decided disappointment to the mere spectators, whose curiosity had not been sufficiently satiated by the tortures which were inflicted on poor Angelica, and the dreadful calamity which befell her infatuated lover, George, who—strange is fate—had his mad career finally arrested, and his health and reputation hopelessly ruined, by his infatuated passion for this noble-hearted girl, the exalted sublimity of whose character he never in the least understood.

How often, in the ordinary ways of life, a scheming man, who is supposed to be thoroughly experienced in worldly affairs, and to read others through and through like a book, is altogether

mistaken in dealings with an honourable man or woman, who only desires upright, straightforward conduct! Being crooked himself, he supposes others cannot be different.

The public having seen Angelica on the rack, were eager to have a look at Gertrude, who, according to an entirely unfounded rumour, it was intended to examine next after Angelica.

There never, of course, had been any intention of examining Gertrude, as she could prove nothing; she had not even left England, and had remained in London with Lady Stonehenge.

Mr. Beaumont left in his carriage, after warmly congratulating Stephen and the Bishop, saying at the same time, laughing, that he had a standing invitation to a little dinner at the Viceregal Lodge, to meet the Marquis of Wrekin, as soon as the trial was over, and giving Stephen an invitation to shoot with him in Scotland in the autumn.

The end of a great trial is like a funeral, when the officiating clergy, the undertakers, the ordinary acquaintances, and the public go away, and their next engagements or employments quickly divert their thoughts from the solemn scene they have gone through; not that they may not have been solemnly impressed at the time, but the impression must be necessarily transient, otherwise the work of the world would be brought to a standstill.

The result of the trial was by no means an unmixed joy, or even triumph, to any concerned. To many of them the recollection of it was a mental anguish, which never was altogether forgotten.

Malet, on behalf of Stephen, took possession of Kingscastle, and the doors were freely opened to him.

His entry into Rathdrum was the scene of uproarious rejoicing, and there were bonfires lit on all the hills, but, on this occasion, carefully watched, so as to do no damage.

The Marchesa returned to the Château Dijon, and there was some hooting, as she was recognised on the road.

What passed between her and her husband, who, as we have said, remained at home, was afterwards made known in a tragic manner.

The Count had been apprised each day of the trial of what had occurred, and he had received an urgent letter from Father O'Toole telling him of the events of the last day, and begging him to go to Wicklow.

When the Marchesa arrived, he was just starting.

The Count—apart from his anxiety about Angelica, the idol of his life, the one earthly blessing left to him—writhed under the exposure of the private domestic affairs of his family, which had been made before the vulgar stare of a public courthouse. He always had prided himself on being a gentleman, which with him meant, above all, a man of honour, and nothing could have possibly galled him more than having his beloved and only child—his peerless Angelica—a witness against her own mother and his wife, who, on her daughter's evidence, was branded as a thief, and convicted of attempting to burn a record of her parish priest.

Father O'Toole remained in Wicklow, watching over Angelica. He had suffered intensely in the whole affair. He dreaded the accusation which might be brought, unfounded as it was, that there had been an attempt to capture George as a convert to Catholicism.

The saintly old man had manfully done his duty, which was a very painful one. He necessarily had to take part in exposing the wife of his principal parishioner as a participator in a great crime. He, as he imagined, had shut on himself the door of the house which had been always open to him, and had cut himself off from the Count, the friend of his early years.

No doubt the discharge of the responsible duties of the ministry of any branch of the Christian religion, and, we may safely add, of other religions throughout the world, if, though they may be erroneous, they tend to the purifying and elevation of mankind, must, when undertaken with the singlemindedness of men like Father O'Toole, raise weak human nature to the highest standard possible, strengthen right impulses, quicken conscience, and drive away what is sordid, narrow, and wrong.

He never wavered in doing what he thought was right in this case, and in advising Angelica of what was her duty also; but it was remarked by his friends that, after the trial, his natural light-hearted gaiety of manner almost disappeared, and a stoop showed itself visibly in his erect carriage.

He met the Count on his reaching Wicklow, and assured him that, though Angelica had been over-

excited and exhausted, she had nothing actually the matter with her, and was then asleep.

It was a relief to the Count, as he dreaded their first meeting; and he thanked Father O'Toole warmly for his care of the girl and his conduct in the matter, and assured him, not only that their friendship would not suffer, but that this adversity would bind them still more closely together.

"How can I ever again enter your house and meet the Marchesa?" the old priest exclaimed.

"That means—what will become of us all?" the Count said, sighing deeply. "I am not going to lose my oldest and dearly valued friend, when I need his sustaining sympathy most. Angelica, of course, will now enter a convent, and I will be left alone; the Marchesa and I must part."

"No, old friend, you wrong Angelica and the holy religion we all profess if she will not know her duty is to remain with you and comfort and care you," was the quiet reply.

Angelica's feelings when she left the witness-box can be far better imagined than described. She, acting under the advice of Father O'Toole, and obeying the dictates of her own conscience, had steeled herself to tell the exact truth, regardless of all consequences. This feeling—the sense that she was doing her duty—had sustained her. Her evidence, mercifully, was not divided over two days.

In the witness-box she had exposed her own mother's guilt; she had recounted the dreadful proposal of marriage and George's wild, reckless, and wicked threats. She had admitted being, after

this painful scene with George, on friendly and intimate terms with him ; and, above all, to a gaping crowd, in answer to Mr. Macnamara, peering at her over his gold spectacles, she had confessed her love for Stephen—a love which was never returned, and which she, a highly sensitive girl, had tried to keep a secret even from herself. She had done this because she knew it was her duty to do so.

Many a man has been dubbed a hero, and had his praise sounded from one end of the earth to the other, for an act which did not require so much courage of the highest nature as passing through such an ordeal cost this young woman.

Still there was a worse time to come. Angelica felt keenly, while under cross-examination, the shame and indignity inflicted upon her ; but the very excitement of the scene and the necessary effort to keep herself under control, and her attention fixed on the questions asked, kept her from collapsing whilst in the courthouse ; but on her return to her lodgings, the strain being over, she fainted away, and it was a long time before consciousness was restored. She then became wildly hysterical, and, Father O'Toole and the kindly people of the house becoming alarmed, a doctor was sent for, and when her father arrived she was sleeping, under the effect of an opiate.

Stephen and the Bishop stayed in Wicklow to look after unfortunate George, and Stephen hastened at once to his bedside.

He had not, of course, cared to look too closely at his brother in court ; but even a casual observation

showed him that George was greatly changed ; he looked bloated, as if he had been drinking heavily, and he walked feebly ; but now that he saw him in bed, with a deep cut on his forehead, arising from his fall, even to an inexperienced eye there was an unmistakable look of death in his face.

His voice was so low, Stephen had to stoop over him to catch what he said, which was : " Stephen, can you forgive me ? "

The generous answer was : " George, old man, buck up ; of course I do, as I hope God will forgive me. You have repented ; you have done your best to atone for your faults. God, the Father of mercies, will forgive you, and your brother cannot refuse to do likewise. You are now in my charge. I have come to nurse you. "

This was too much for the dying man. He sobbed like a child.

The door was gently opened, and the Bishop came in.

" Uncle, Stephen forgives me. I was jealous of him. I am so no longer. I love him now as I did when we were little children. "

" Yes, yes, boy, " said the good Bishop, " of course he forgives you. Can I do anything for you ? "

" Yes, " was the eager answer ; " call Father O'Toole. "

" Then you have turned Roman Catholic, George ? "

" No, no, uncle ; I should first have been a Protestant in order to turn to anything else. I am dying, and about to face my Maker, and afraid to do so. Things are too serious for me. Time is too

short for me to choose a religion. I want to be forgiven by God, and Stephen says I am."

Father O'Toole came to the bedside, and George said to him, with fast failing voice: "Tell Angelica she was, at the last, my guardian angel. I never knew what a despicable wretch I was until I saw her under the lash, suffering for my sins."

His mind here apparently began to wander, or, at least, he became oblivious of those about him. A thought came to him—a verse probably learned at his good mother's knee when he was a little child, and the meaning of which he scarcely then realized, and he said, as if in a dream: "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom."

Father O'Toole exclaimed: "Those are the words of the penitent thief, to whom our Saviour made the gracious answer, 'This day thou shalt be with me in paradise.'" And the Bishop said: "The penitent thief was saved without the necessity of declaring himself a member of any particular branch of our all-embracing Christian Church."

A peaceful, tranquil expression came over George's face, and the Bishop continued: "How like you are, George, to your father!"

George did not hear him. He had passed quietly away from this world.

The next day the Count was summoned back to the Château Dijon by a distracted messenger; and when he arrived home, he found the house in a state of confusion. No one dared to tell him what had happened. He asked where was the Marchesa, and in reply was brought to her room, and saw her

lying on her bed. Coming close, and stooping over, he perceived quickly that she was dead. There was a strong smell in the room, and a bottle of laudanum, half consumed, was standing on the table.

At the inquest which followed, the Marchesa's maid said her mistress had eaten nothing after her return from the Assizes, and drank only a cup of coffee. She said she was tired, and went to her room, telling the witness she did not need her assistance ; and in the morning she went and found the bedroom door bolted ; after a while, the witness called through the door, and, getting no answer, she summoned the butler and another servant ; they broke open the door, and found the Marchesa just as the Count saw her.

The Count said when she returned from Wicklow the day before he reproached her with her conduct, and she answered him defiantly ; and immediately afterwards he had to leave owing to the alarming accounts of his daughter's state of health. He said positively he made no use of threats to her, and he had no reason to believe she would take her life.

Thus died, almost simultaneously, the two people who had done so much harm and stirred up so much strife.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE DOG TEAGUE.

ANGELICA slowly recovered; she had sustained a severe shock both mentally and physically. She never asked about her mother; and until she was sufficiently recovered to leave Wicklow, she was not told even that she was ill. By degrees the news was broken to her that her mother was dead; but she thought she had died suddenly from heart disease, and she never learnt the real truth. To the surprise of everyone, the Count and Angelica preferred going back to the Château; but it soon became painfully evident to Father O'Toole that they had returned only for a short stay. The Château was dismantled; its art treasures were given away. Father O'Toole got a couple of priceless pictures which he had for years been accustomed to admire. What touched him most was a final visit he had from Angelica. She came to him with her pet Irish terrier following her, with a solemn look on the animal's face, as if he had a presentiment of what was going to happen, and most probably he had; dogs certainly know when a house is about being shut up; they know the meaning of packed trunks, and read the faces of those they are fond of like books.

"Father O'Toole," said Angelica, trying to speak calmly, "I have brought you Teague. I know you will value him for my sake, and he knows he is not to worry Tobias; and it will be my last word to him. You have often let him share Tobias's saucer; and though he beats all other cats, he never touches him." She ran on in this way, trying to avoid anything more serious in her farewell to one she remembered as long as she did Father O'Toole, and who loved her as well as if she had been his own daughter.

"Won't you take him with you, Angel dear? he will be company for you."

"No, no, Father O'Toole; Teague is a regular little Irishman; he could not understand Italy or its ways. It is better for him to remain here. Good-bye, dear, dear friend; if I send for you, you will come to me?"

"Yes, yes," said Father O'Toole, "if not sooner summoned by my Maker to give an account of my stewardship."

Poor Angelica took Teague in her arms and hugged and kissed him; the loving fellow whined piteously, and she fled out of the house.

The Count and his daughter went first to Rome, and finally settled down in the south of France. The Count never rallied after his wife's death; his natural gaiety and bonhomie deserted him, and he shunned all society, except that of his devoted daughter. Angelica always had a smile for her father, even when she felt least inclined to be cheerful, seeing her beloved charge so sad, and fading day by day.

We anticipate by a few years an account of the termination of his sufferings. About five years after the father and daughter had left Ireland, Father O'Toole was summoned by a letter from Angelica to a watering-place in Normandy, where the Count had gone under medical advice. He at once obeyed the message, and arrived in time to see the last of his dear old friend.

The Count made a peculiar will. He left an ample provision for Angelica, and an annuity to Father O'Toole, and a direction that Château Dijon was to be razed to the ground. He explained to the old priest he did not want the finger of scorn pointed at the house, and he desired no memorial left of his unfortunate wife's death.

Angelica at once entered a foreign convent, and chose one where she would have an opportunity of teaching and training Irish and English girls.

"They might feel lonely, Father O'Toole," she said, "coming to a strange land and strange tongues; and Irish girls are not very good linguists, and are home-sick, and a little petting at first could do them no harm, and not interfere with their religious duties."

Angelica in time rose to be Mother Superior of her convent; and by her abilities and education, and, above all, by her unselfish and saintly life, she won the respect, admiration, and devoted love of all around her.

CHAPTER XXXV.

ARE THE IRISH AS BLACK AS THE ENGLISH PAINT THEM?

STEPHEN, as a matter of course, formally established his right to vote for the twenty-eight Representative Peers, in the United Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland, as Earl of Clara. There were then several vacancies amongst the twenty-eight Peers, including the vacancy caused by his father's death; and he received the distinction of being elected to one of them, and therefore entitled to sit in the Imperial Parliament.

After taking his seat he returned to his curacy in the Black Country. Gertrude remained with Lady Stonehenge.

It was felt after the tragic events which had happened the marriage could not take place for some time. Stephen found he had to come up very often to Westminster for an Ecclesiastical Bill before the House of Lords; and he certainly did distinguish himself as a speaker in that illustrious and critical assembly, and was of great use to the high-church party to which he belonged.

He was offered and accepted a Canonry in St. Paul's Cathedral, which he took on the condition of being allowed, when wanted, to return as a missionary preacher amongst the colliers, in whose

spiritual and temporal welfare he took a very great interest.

Stephen, as a Canon of St. Paul's, when announced to preach in that vast building on Sunday afternoons, addressed large crowds of people, most of whom rarely attended any religious service. Many of them doubtless came to mock, and it is to be hoped of these some remained to pray. He was not only a pulpit orator, who was able to catch and keep the attention of his congregation in an ordinary building; he combined with this power of interesting his audience in what he said the physical power of making himself heard to an extent few others possessed. He had a marvellous carrying voice, which was heard at a great distance by those present in the Cathedral.

Gertrude went on a visit to Wrekin Castle, to be welcomed as a kinswoman; the kindly old Marchioness wrote to her.

Lady Stonehenge said to her on leaving: "Mind, Gertrude, you are to be married from my house in London; only on those terms will I let you go." And Gertrude blushing consented, for was not Stephen standing by, ready to bring her to the railway station?

Lady Stonehenge about a week afterwards got the following from Lady Mildred Northallerton:—

"YORKSHIRE.

"DEAR GUSSY,

"I admit your philanthropic folly did not turn out so badly this time, though I am against mulattoes

and mongrels ; and what is your great heroine and peerless beauty but a mongrel, half English and half Irish ? The Irish may have white skins, but they are all rebels, and dangerous, and the Protestants are worse than the Papists ; they are ruder, and want what they call more rights, and claim to be English, though they have potato faces and brogues in voices which are very loud, and in shoes which are very thick. My cook, May, who had never been out of Yorkshire, and got her training at the Petworths, asked me, when I returned from Ireland, whether the Irish were blacks, and, before I could answer, my housemaid said, 'Lor', no, May, I thought they were black at first when I saw them at Bishop Auckland, coming out of the coal-pits ; but when they wiped their faces—they never wash them, like you and me—they are only brown.' Well now, Gussy, you may laugh at all this, but the Irish are not the English, and a half-breed generally has none of the good qualities of either race. So I am glad you are getting rid of her ; though, you old fool, why are you giving her the wedding-breakfast, and asking me to it ? I suppose I must go to take care of you, and flirt with my former flame, Wrekin. Hoping you will get a little sense,

"Yours, as ever,

"MILDRED."

Lady Stonehenge bore more from Lady Mildred than anyone else. There were perhaps some faint murmurs from her own daughters that there were

as good fish in the sea as ever were caught, and that Miss Malet was made too much of ; still, Gertrude, with great tact, disarmed criticism. She never changed her manner after her position became established, except that she became a little less distant, and one with whom a joke might now be made.

She returned, after her visit to Castle Wrekin, to a house her father had taken temporarily in London, before finally deciding where he would settle, and whether it would be necessary for him and Gertrude to make a short trip to Sydney to wind up affairs ; and it is probably unnecessary to mention that the Canon of St. Paul's was a frequent visitor there.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

DON'T MOVE THAT FONT.

THE marriage of Stephen and Gertrude, after all, did not take place in London. The Marquis, grand old English nobleman as he was, said : "Gertrude has been cruelly used by our family. She was robbed of her name for a long time, and permanently of her fortune, and I am resolved to try and make up for it."

He actually offered, and pressed to be allowed, to pay back the money his uncle Arthur fraudulently received, but neither Stephen nor Malet would hear of it.

The Marchioness then came forward, and said the most practical way of showing to the world that Gertrude had been restored to her true position was to have the wedding from Wrekin Castle, the family seat of the head of her mother's family.

Lady Stonehenge had too much good sense not to see that this was for her protégée's advantage, and contented herself by giving a handsome wedding present, and engaging the couple for a reception in her house in Grosvenor Square, after the honeymoon.

They were married, then, in Wrekin Parish Church. The weather was propitious, and the party walked through the demesne to the ceremony.

The church had been an abbey church, and was a splendid old fifteenth-century structure, fortunately completed before the Reformation. It had been well preserved, and a Christian service had been without any interruption always celebrated in it from the time when it had been erected. It had a curious roof and a quantity of crosses and crucifixes and rare stained glass, which had all escaped the ravages of the Reformation and the Puritan soldiers. The numerous relations and friends of the family were invited. Stephen wrote to his stepmother, asking her to allow Conrad to be his best man, and, of course, a formal invitation was sent to the mother and son by the Marchioness. Rather to the surprise of everyone, both invitations were accepted by the Dowager Countess, and Conrad wrote a loving, boyish letter to his great hero, Stephen.

The knot was tied by no less than two bishops. Of course, one of them was the Bishop of Balinasloe, and the other the bishop of the diocese where Stephen had worked so usefully and successfully amongst the colliers.

Malet, being low-church, was assigned Lady Stonehenge to take care of at the wedding. She was a sympathizer with the Dissenters, and usually attended one of Lady Huntingdon's chapels; so, if they were disposed, they might criticise together any part of the service they objected to, without doing harm, if they did no good.

Malet murmured at the crosses and crucifixes and the figures on the glass windows; but Lady Stonehenge explained to him if people did not

worship or adore them it did not matter, and that they were in character with the old church.

"If they were put there now for the first time," she said, warming to her subject, "we might suspect something; but it would be an intolerant act to take them away."

"I thought," said Malet suspiciously, "I caught the Vicar bowing to them."

"Oh, that is to what we call the communion-table, and he the altar. We must only leave them alone."

"Well, Lady Stonehenge, I will keep my mouth shut if it were to suffocate me; and if all Puseyites are as good as Stephen, there cannot be as much harm in their teaching as I once supposed; and hardship and travelling may have taught me more than I once would have cared to learn."

The wedding-breakfast was a grand, solid sit-down-at-a-table affair in the good old style—not one of your modern, gimcrack receptions, which are merely crush "At Homes," with champagne spilled and wedding-cake crumbled about the carpet, if, happily, they do not also damage the ladies' dresses.

The Bishops were in turn asked to propose the bride's health; but they agreed in saying that that duty would be more appropriately discharged by Dr. Greene, who had providentially saved her life.

The leading Dublin doctors and surgeons have always held their own well as orators in comparison with the Pulpit and the Bar; and Dr. Greene was no exception to the rule.

Other toasts were also given, including the time-honoured one of "All round the Wrekin."

The festivities passed over successfully; and, subsequently, Lady Stonehenge's reception was a great affair.

The happy couple stayed in Malet's London house before finally deciding what they were to do.

Just then the Vicar of Kingscastle died. Stephen declared that was like a message to him to go over to Ireland to help the cause. He then decided he would live in Kingscastle, and be his own Vicar.

There was consternation at this resolution, both in the Dartmoor Collieries and at St. Paul's. Stephen resigned all his English appointments; but said, if invited, and not forgotten, he would often run over to preach. Still, his permanent residence and work would be in Wicklow.

At St. Paul's there was murmuring at his so soon giving up the Canonry to which he, so young a man, had been appointed. He saw his loss there undoubtedly would be felt; yet he thought an Irish absentee landlord neglected his plain duty, and that "property had its duties as well as its rights"; and he knew the Irish Protestant Church had less workers in its fields than its English sister.

Stephen and his bride went to Kingscastle to live; and old people still talk of the dragging home of his Reverence, the new Lord, who gave up England and Queen Victoria's court to come and settle amongst them; and the beautiful young Countess who sang "Kathleen Mavourneen" for them from the steps of the castle.

The coming-home actually made a young man for the nonce of Father O'Toole, who presented the Countess with a lovely brooch with a harp and crown.

Father O'Toole's speech on the occasion was a very happy one. He said he felt as if he were getting a coadjutor to help him in his old age in the new Earl of Clara; that the house of Clara deserved well of the pleasant valley from which they derived their title; and that the lovely bride now coming to reside amongst them was the fairest flower of the garden of Ireland; and that she would be the queen of love and beauty in the grand ancestral castle, which had always kept an open door for all seeking its far-famed hospitality.

Father O'Toole, it may be imagined, was cheered to the echo. He followed up his speech by a sermon on the next Sunday, which we would be tempted to give were it not that we might be accused of plagiarising too many of his discourses, and anticipating their issue in due course from authentic manuscripts.

The Earl of Clara himself preached in his own church three sermons on the same Sunday to overflow congregations, and felt satisfied he had found pastures new and abundant for his ministry. He was the first rich man of the title. His poor father, who had only a life estate in Kingscastle, and had his own life heavily insured, left the property practically unencumbered to his successor. Malet had made a large settlement on his daughter; and old Lord Dartmoor, who was immensely proud of Stephen, his expectant heir, made him a very liberal

allowance in anticipation of the vast inheritance which would finally come to him.

Stephen made a good use of his means in many ways. He threw down and rebuilt the parsonage for the use of his Curate. He next resolved to practically rebuild the parish church, and consulted his uncle about it. They wisely determined to introduce nothing which could be regarded as high-church or even leading to it.

"Of course, uncle," said Stephen, "I cannot leave that font sticking up there before my eyes at the top of the church; I will put it down at the door where it ought to be; don't you think so?"

"Do you want my private opinion where a font ought to be, Stephen; or what I would advise you to do?"

"Both," said Stephen, smiling.

"Then, my private opinion is the font ought to be removed to the door; but my advice to you is to leave it exactly where it is. I as a young man admired the Oxford movement, and became what my friend Amby calls a Puseyite, and as an old man I have not changed my opinions; and when it is necessary, I hope I shall have the courage and honesty to say what I think; but my experience as a Bishop is that there can be nothing more unwise—I go further, nothing more unchristian—than to start angry discussions on immaterial questions. You are at present beloved in your own parish; everyone will rejoice at your restoring and enlarging the church; but if you touched that font, it might destroy everything."

"I spoke to my father-in-law, and he said nothing against it," said poor Stephen, not wishing to give up his little idea.

"My dear nephew," said the good Bishop, laughing, "if you publicly swore allegiance to the Pope, I positively think Amby would say nothing. He told me the other day he was sure neither Martin Luther nor Berkeley could hold a candle to you."

"But uncle," said Stephen, playing his last card—and the card always used by an innovator—"would it not be narrow-minded and bigoted for anyone to object to changing the position of that font?"

"I would agree with you, Stephen, if it were the other way about, and the font at the door, and any fool proposed to bring it up to where it now peaceably stands; but a charge might, I think, be fairly enough brought against you in either of two ways for proposing to bring it down to the door: either that you were narrow-minded and petty for wanting the change; or that the change meant a declaration of some new and mysterious high-church doctrine which the Irish Puritan might object to."

"Say no more, uncle," said Stephen, the Christian, gentlemanly spirit in him happily asserting itself; "the font will stay where it is. Now, to pass on to another question: I am thinking of a new harmonium which Gertrude can play."

"There, Stephen, you are on perfectly safe ground. Every Irishman, be he high-church, low-church, or moderate-church, yes, even Methodist or rabid Dissenter, provided he be a real Irishman to the backbone, will be charmed to see a handsome woman—

mind, my remark would not apply to an ugly one—playing the instrument; and, what's more, I am quite sure, playing it divinely.”

Stephen was made an honorary Canon of St. Patrick's Cathedral, and often preached there, and in many other places in Ireland, and was prominent in helping on Christian charities. He, however, steadily refused all Church promotion; and he gave his time and thought principally to his own beloved district.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE HUMMING BOWL.

MALET again sounded the tenant who had taken his house and farm, and found him willing to sell at double the value of his interest ; and he bought him out. Stephen offered him back his old leaseholds, including the sub-tenancies. Malet, however, refused. "No," said he, "the English Government treated the landlords badly, the tenants worse, but the middlemen worst of all. In the English garrison in Ireland" (he continued) "the nobility and so-called aristocracy, like the Life Guards and Horse Guards in England, are merely for show, with their gewgaws, swell English accents, and gold lace, and are feasted like returned prodigals in St. Patrick's Hall; but the poor 'divils' of middlemen are the fighting line and scouts who have held the country for the English Government. The middlemen have been hit by the landlords in the face, stabbed by the tenants in the back, and deserted by the selfish Saxons. No, thank you, Stephen, I'll have no more tenants; I prefer being one myself; and there may be signs that their day is coming."

Malet found it was not necessary for him to return to Australia. Young Jimmy Simpson, in whom he had justly full confidence, was able, by

correspondence, to settle any affairs which Malet had not concluded before leaving.

He had, indeed, latterly been gradually winding up his business and ventures, and carefully investing his capital, and there was not much to be done. He had long since paid in full his old Irish debts, and provided handsomely for his cousin the Bank Manager, who had suffered through his downfall.

It was curious how personally popular Malet had become. No more violent politician could be found in Ireland at a meeting. He was an ideal out-and-out Conservative orator of the old type. He used strong language, undiluted by any qualifications or exceptions; he used handy similes, either bucolic or sporting, and mixed up with it all a power of hitting a nail on the head, or a weak point in a Nationalist's argument, when it came in his way. But, as was said of him, he hit out straight; never did a mean or shabby thing; never kicked a man when he was down; and delighted the country people by his fearless riding and unerring shot. They were glad to see him amongst them again, particularly when he asked them for no rent, and had his ideas of a day's pay for a working man greatly enlarged by Australian experiences.

Malet, however, was not the active sportsman he had been; though, as he said, when he was up in time to the dog in a dead-set, he could still bring down a grouse. He suffered from indigestion, and determined to consult Dr. Greene. Dr. Greene heard his case, and asked him what he drank.

"A great deal of tea and a little water."

"Dear me!" said the doctor. "Do you take no stimulant?"

"None, for the last ten years. I never was a drunkard; but I got into the habit of 'treating,' or 'shouting,' as they call it in Sydney, and I gave it up altogether—and made my fortune. I had my eyes then clear, when others had them red."

"Well, now, Malet," said the doctor, "I will advise you to take good claret, or ten years old John Jameson; it will enable you to assimilate your food. You have many years before you yet; but you want a fillip—say a couple of glasses of claret or a glass of whiskey."

"Well, doctor," said Malet, slowly and thoughtfully rubbing his chin, "I always found claret tedious drinking; and as to ten years' old John Jameson, it may do very well for old ladies or for cordials—it is too mild for me. I would be more inclined to the five-year-old, with a bit of a bite in it, if I tried it at all; or perhaps, better still, a blend between five-year-old Jameson and George Roe, of the same age; and as to one of those small sherry glasses in a tumbler of boiling water, you could neither taste it nor smell it. What do you say to a glass and a tilly, doctor? I would sooner take none than take it mawkish."

"Malet," said the doctor, with much gravity, "yours is the language of strong liquor, blended with strong commonsense. There is nothing weak about you. My prescription is—Five-year-old John Jameson, with a dash of George Roe through it, in a

large claret glass, to make one tumbler of punch, each day after dinner ; or cold water in summer. As to whether or not you add sugar or lemons, I leave to your uncontrolled discretion."

"All right, doctor," said the ex-Australian. "It will be always hot punch in old Ireland. Cold water may do well enough in a dry, dusty place like New South Wales."

Malet returned home, better in anticipation for his consultation, bringing down with him a supply of the blend. He took the doctor's prescription, and never exceeded it, or was tempted to do so. He lived near his daughter, but still did not haunt Kingscastle, or try either to live up to his son-in-law or bring him down to his level. He had sent money over to his widowed sister in Dublin, and got her family well educated ; and now one of his nieces was glad to come and keep house for him, and (as he remarked to Father O'Toole) was well able to take her place amongst the company at the Castle.

Father O'Toole and Malet often dined with each other. Malet at first always had light wines for Father O'Toole ; but one raw, damp evening in January he said to his old friend, "Ah, Father, don't you think a drop of the wine of the country would warm you better, and form a pleasing contrast to that cold, sleety rain?"

"Well, Amby, I am not above taking advice in secular matters from you ; I will try it to-night any way," said Father O'Toole, with his fine old Irish smile irradiating his face.

Father O'Toole found Dr. Greene's prescription

suited his constitution also ; and Malet, delighted at his advice being taken, said : " Now, Father, the Papist—pray excuse the term—through his landlord, still pays tithes to *his* Protestant minister ; why should not the Protestant do likewise to *his* parish priest ? As my tithes and dues to you, I will send you a cask of my blend. And did not *you*, my parish priest, stand to me years ago when others were against me ? "

" Amby, I will take your dues and share them when you dine with me ; and indeed I am to have a Visitation next week, and I always have to get in whiskey for it ; and I suspect that your blend will go down much better than anything I could buy. "

These old cronies had many a pleasant, quiet little dinner and talk together ; and both of them knew how to be merry and wise.

Father O'Toole was the first to fail. He wanted to retire, but his Archbishop and parishioners would not hear of it. He got an additional curate.

" My only coadjutor will be the Earl, " he said in speaking to Gertrude. He was a fine old type of parish priest, and there were and still are many like him. It must not be thought that Father O'Toole was a tuft-hunter, or making up to Protestants, or what is sometimes called in Ireland, " a Government man. " Nothing of the kind ; we have only told so much of his history as enters into our narrative.

One might think, in reading Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, that for years Boswell was continuously in his company ; nothing could be further from the truth ; still, Boswell made the most of his oppor-

tunities. And so we have tried to do with Father O'Toole. He was an able, learned, good man, without vanity or worldly ambition. Being a highly-cultured man, of good birth, he naturally enjoyed genial and refined society; but he mixed chiefly with his own Catholic parishioners, and that he had won their respect and affection was shown by his having the largest funeral ever remembered in these Wicklow highlands.

Father O'Toole never regarded his old friend Dr. Doyle's views on the reunion of Christendom as within the bounds of practical religion; though it is possible, in his actions in this work-a-day world, and in his temperament, he was nearer to it than his more, uncompromising, earnest, energetic friend.

Father O'Toole was not (like Dr. Doyle) the man to preach a crusade or a new departure in religious thought, or to carry Catholic Emancipation, or abolish unjust tithes; but in his own quieter way he did a great deal of good. He had "charity" in the widest and most comprehensive sense of the term, and succeeded in diffusing a respect for this great Christian virtue throughout his large mountain parish.

Malet became absorbed, in his later days, in the all-engrossing pursuit of teaching his grandson, the future Earl of Clara, how to ride and shoot. "You may," he said to the father and mother, "attend to the rest of his education; I will confine my attention to these two all-important subjects." The boy was a healthy, well-grown, manly little fellow, with a fine pair of blue eyes like his grandfather.

As soon as he had got well through the donkey stage, Malet presented him with a pony ; one, as he said, with a little touch of spirit in it, which would try the lad's mettle. He began the education in shooting, with rabbits ; but he never lived to finish it.

The substitution of breech-loaders for muzzle-loaders Malet declared was the greatest invention ever took place. The Earl presented him with one, and he kept for a long time putting the cartridge in and taking it out, and finally ejaculated, " Bless my soul, to think of things coming to that." He was rather sceptical at first if they would shoot hard, and never rested until he killed a rabbit with one. He had everything planned to ride a pony up to the top of the Castle for the August grouse-shooting ; but alas ! it was not to be. He drove into Rathdrum and bought some quicks, which were wet, and got them packed round him in his gig, and got a chill, and passed away.

The Bishop of Ballinasloe did not long outlive his friend Amby.

Lady Stonehenge, many years before these last events which we have just related had occurred, paid a summer visit at Kingscastle—her very first visit to Ireland—and related her experiences in a letter to Lady Mildred Northallerton, which, fortunately, has been preserved. It ran as follows :—

" KINGSCASTLE, *May*.

" DEAR MILLY,

" At last I have found my way to this green isle of saints and sinners. Why did you, you fussy old

woman, try to put me off going? I stopped a few days at Chester on my route, and then on to Holyhead; and, after seven long hours, reached Kingstown Jetty. The sail into the Bay of Dublin repaid all—a miniature Bay of Naples, with Sugarloaf mountain, like a little Vesuvius—you told me you would not get up to see the view—and then on by a queer, narrow little railway to “dear, dirty Dublin.” To be poetical, I found our melancholy sister Erin in tears—and such tears—the rain fell in bucketsful. The captain told me to expect rain, as it was suspiciously bright sailing in. Well, when it did clear, it was sunny and balmy—not too warm; and Stephen and Gertrude, who were staying in the city, drove me down here, through a lovely country, all hill and dale, looking, I am told, at its best, as all the rivers and brooks were full of water; but the best of it was the hawthorn, and the furze, and the broom, and the rhododendrons, all in full flower. May is the month clearly to visit Wicklow, though some tell me August—the month of the heather—is lovelier still. Why on earth, Milly, did you stick the whole of your time in Dublin? Oh, the happiness of my darling Gerty! I defy you, Milly, to say anything against her. They get on splendidly. I dined with Mr. Malet, and he insisted on giving me a taste, as he calls it, of his brew of punch—made by some mysterious blend—and, well—it was uncommonly good. ‘There’s not a headache in a hogshead of it,’ he said. I did not take a hogshead, but the ‘drop’ (I believe that is the correct expression) I did take did me no harm. Father O’Toole dined

at Mr. Malet's, and I have met him frequently here. He is a dear old man. We had long chats about the Continent. He was delighted to hear I had been at Lisbon.

"Gertrude is an ideal 'Lady Bountiful;' in fact, that expression does not exactly suit her, as she does not let her left hand know what her right hand doeth. They have nice children, and my little god-daughter is very like her mother.

"Gertrude desires to be kindly remembered to you, and says she will never forget that it was on your recommendation I took her; and she also says that it was fortunate she had you to tell her plain facts, or she would have been spoiled altogether. Come now, Milly, does not this disarm you?

"Ever yours,

"AUGUSTA STONEHENGE."

Lady Mildred's reply has unfortunately been lost.

THE END.

